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THUCYDIDES AND THE
PHILOSOPHICAL ORIGINS
OF HISTORY

DARIEN SHANSKE

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Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History

This book addresses the questions of how and why history begins with the work of Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War* is distinctive in that it is a prose narrative, meant to be read rather than performed. It focuses on the unfolding of contemporary great power politics to the exclusion of almost all other elements of human life, including the divine. Western history has been largely an extension of Thucydides's narrative in that it repeats the unique methodological assumptions and concerns that first appear in his text. The power of Thucydides's text has never been attributed to either the charm of its language or the entertainment value of its narrative, or to some personal attribute of the author. In this study, Darien Shanske analyzes the difficult language and structure of Thucydides's *History* and argues that the text has drawn so many readers into its distinctive worldview because of its kinship to the contemporary language and structure of classical tragedy. This kinship is not merely a matter of shared vocabulary or even aesthetic sensibility. Rather, it is grounded on a shared philosophical position, in particular on the polemical metaphysics of Heraclitus.

Darien Shanske is a scholar of classical literature and works on topics at the intersection of philosophy, classics, and law.

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DARIEN SHANSKE



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For My Parents,

Without whom not,

Thanks to whom,

Everything

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Introduction

Restoring the Wonder of Thucydides

In 411 B.C., the city of Chios revolted from the Athenian Empire. In the midst of narrating this revolt, Thucydides states the following:

After this [battle], the Chians [now under siege] no longer came out against [the Athenians], though the Athenians ravaged their land, their land being well stocked and untouched from the time of the Persian wars until now. For, next to the Spartans, I have observed only the Chians being both fortunate and moderate, and to the extent that their polis prospered, to that extent they ordered [their polis] more securely. And even as regards this revolt, [for people] might think they did it contrary to the safer path, but they did not dare to do it until they would be putting themselves in danger with many good allies and observing that, after the disaster in Sicily, not even the Athenians themselves denied any longer that their affairs were entirely and certainly desperate. And if [the Chians] were overthrown by that which is unexpected in human life, they held the opinion that was in error with many others who thought the same things, that the [power] of Athens would be quickly and utterly destroyed.¹

This does not appear to be a very remarkable passage in any sense. Both the facts, such as that the Chians were completely under siege despite their initial strength, and the analysis, namely, that Athens's resilience was surprising, seem fairly simple. There is nothing even within the more limited context of Thucydides's own work that singles this passage out as exceptional: all of the major themes, such as Thucydides's opinion of the Spartan government and the uncanny resilience of the Athenians, are covered elsewhere, and their development in Thucydides is the subject of much scholarly discussion. Indeed, this passage is from part of

the text of Thucydides judged so unremarkable by critics, so unpolished (no speeches, seemingly unmotivated repetitions), that this entire book (Eight) is generally taken as a draft, as suggesting what the more complete sections of Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* looked like before revision.

Book Eight may well be a draft; it is certainly unfinished. And it is also true that from our perspective this passage is not remarkable. It is the primary task of this book to demonstrate what is remarkable in this passage, including our acceptance of it as unremarkable.² When Herodotus, Thucydides's great predecessor, who may well have been finishing his text while Thucydides was beginning his,³ gives a long, digression-filled account of the all-important revolt of Miletus, though there is astute commentary on the power of Persia,⁴ the primary events leading up to the revolt are personal and colorful. From Herodotus, we learn that one powerful Greek, Histiaeus, urges the revolt so that he might return home, and the actual leader of the Greeks in Miletus, Aristagoras, is largely motivated to revolt by the fact that he cannot pay the debts he has incurred to the Persians.⁵ Herodotus also tells us that Histiaeus's order to revolt is tattooed onto the scalp of his slave, and Aristagoras's trouble with the Persians is traced to a dispute over the punishment of a ship's captain who has been negligent in his duties.⁶

We cannot now see the oddities of Thucydides's terse treatment of the Chian revolt because the distinctive features of Thucydides's text, rather than those of Herodotus, have been reinscribed all around us. We live in something of a glass prison, a "fly-bottle," to use Wittgenstein's famous image.⁷ Hans Sluga describes Wittgenstein's fly-bottle as follows:

Fly-bottles, we must know, are devices for catching flies. Attracted by a sweet liquid in the bottle, the fly enters into it from an opening at the bottom and when it has stilled its hunger tries to leave by flying upward towards the light. But the bottle is sealed at the top and so all attempts to escape by that route must fail. Since it never occurs to the fly to retrace its path into the bottle, it will eventually perish inside.⁸

Sluga also notes that the image of the fly-bottle refers back to another famous passage, which reads in part, "the decisive step in the conjuring trick has already been made, and precisely the one that seemed innocent."⁹ There are several crucial ways in which Thucydides's *History* is like Wittgenstein's fly-bottle. The first step into the bottle is innocent and is irreversible. Further, the view from within is, in a sense, complete even as it is sharply circumscribed.¹⁰ This leads to the crucial disanalogy: the

Thucydidean fly-bottle is not fatal but is actually life-enhancing, hence its continued success.

Wittgenstein saw his aim in philosophy to show us *out* of fly-bottles, whereas the task of this book is to show that we are in a fly-bottle, to outline its contours, and, most importantly, to analyze how we have arrived within it. The world to which Thucydides introduces us is momentous, and the outline and the exact steps taken into the bottle are significant. It is not the argument of this book that there is anything to be remedied in connection with Thucydides's enriching of our world through, paradoxically, impoverishing it. This is to say that Thucydides can only make certain features of our world stand out as a coherent whole at the expense of forcing other features into the background.

To understand how quickly even the short, supposedly unfinished passage with which we began can fill our horizon, only a little further analysis of it is required. Chios was a polis on the relatively large island of Chios. It was one of only two cities in the Athenian Empire that, at the start of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C., contributed ships rather than tribute to Athens. The other city in this category, Mytilene (on the island of Lesbos), revolted in 427 B.C. (also unsuccessfully) after Athens was struck by the Great Plague. The Chians have waited to revolt until after the destruction of Athens's great Sicilian Expedition, when the Athenian Empire is seemingly on the verge of destruction, as indicated in our passage. The Chians not only have their own ships, which means they have both the actual weapons and the naval experience, but also, as Thucydides tells us, they have wealth as a result of the peace they have enjoyed for nine decades. This is a peace that the Athenian Empire played no small part in preserving for the island cities of the Aegean. The Chians, consistent with their general good sense, pursue their revolt by encouraging the revolt of the tributary cities of the empire, thereby demonstrating understanding that the Athenian Empire relies on its navy, which is in turn funded by the very cities of the empire that the navy has kept in submission.

For all their good sense and excellent preparation, the Chians are mistaken about the power of Athens. Everyone else is surprised too, including the Athenians. The misjudgment of Athenian power is one of the primary factors that contribute to the course of the war. For instance, the Spartans seem to believe Athenian power can be quickly squelched when they start the war, the Athenians seem to believe their power is limitless when they invade Sicily, and everyone thinks the Athenians are finished when the expedition is destroyed. Of course, Thucydides does not just say that it is Athenian power that is misjudged, much less state which aspect of

the Athenians is so unexpected. In the passage presented previously, he simply uses a neuter plural that I have translated as “power,” specifically the power to equip naval expeditions capable of both defeating the navies of others and laying siege to cities. Yet this indefinite pronoun could just as well refer to something about the community of Athens, a singularly dynamic democratic empire that confounds both its enemies and itself.

Nor is it explicit in the passage what it means that the Chians were overthrown by that “which is unexpected [*paralogos*] in human life.” Clearly, the resilience of Athens is unexpected, but it is not beyond all reckoning (*logos*); it is not an earthquake occurring at the crucial moment in a battle, for instance. Here too, the reference is to be understood as to other political calculations and arguments made within the work, and, particularly to the argument that Athenian power, through the symbiotic relationship between its navy and its empire, can be unraveled through a vicious cycle, just as it was built by a virtuous one. This is to say that the first Athenian navy, built by the silver at Laurium to fight the Persians, became the means for securing an empire that then supported the navy. After the defeat in Sicily, it appears that Athens does not have the power to put down cities that revolt, and that without these cities’ tribute Athens will have still less power. Yet this whole train of thought, clearly valid to an extent, is proven to be limited by the fate of the Chian revolt. Why is this seemingly irresistible deduction ultimately delusory? We must read our passage, and all the other passages, again, and, in doing this, we are settling in to the fly-bottle.

Perhaps our brief passage about Chios was meant to be expressed in a series of speeches,¹¹ but its import in light of the rest of the text is still rather clear, as is what should be remarkable about this passage. It is a piece of prose narrative, oriented toward a reader, about near-contemporary events, presented in a characteristic, consistent, and magisterial style admitting of no doubt, though boasting of and occasionally intimating critical research,¹² with little role for the divine or any obvious connection with what we could consider morality, and with relatively little showcasing of powerful personalities or remarkable achievements.¹³ The passage does presuppose recognition of some general types and understanding of related ideas, such as those concerning the nature of the Athenian Empire and naval empires more broadly, as well as, of course, a knowledge of events that have gone before, from the Sicilian Expedition to the Persian Wars. Finally, as our brief analysis demonstrated, any thoughtful consideration of this passage is expansive, drawing in new issues, actors, and analogies. Yet for all the penetrating interconnection,

a hierarchical architectonic does *not* emerge. In fact, as we just saw, our passage is about the frustration experienced by those who thought they had deduced what was to be done.

These characteristics of this passage are characteristics of Thucydides's text in general and are some of the features that distinguish the world that Thucydides's work discloses, a world commonly labeled "historical." Historical here means that these are the features that would thereafter become the identifying characteristics of the genre of writing and later the academic discipline known in the West as "history." Thucydides's text does not merely share these features with later works in the genre; it is the *first* work of the genre and the work that is referenced again and again as such. The peculiarities of Thucydides's text have been reduplicated in the discipline that he founded (and beyond); that is, works of history are consistent narratives written in prose, and are products of both critical research and more or less conscious principles concerning the functioning of individuals, groups of individuals, and institutions within a political entity and without.

We live in a world of history that did not exist before Thucydides. Now that this world has been founded, we presume it to have always been there,¹⁴ and thus we can write pre-Thucydidean history and correct Thucydides. But the assumed ubiquity of Thucydides's concerns only emphasizes the degree to which his approach has triumphed everywhere. No one claims that Thucydides owes this triumph to his personal charm or to the charm of his prose style.¹⁵ Somehow it is the structure of the text itself that had and still has such remarkable power.

It is also not possible to attribute the power of the Thucydidean paradigm to an accident of transmission,¹⁶ to say that if we only had the complete work of Hellanicus (a rough contemporary of Thucydides), then we would see how Thucydides's work was just another work in this genre. We know that no one else wrote as Thucydides did and that the features that distinguished his work were noticed by his contemporaries.¹⁷ Of the major fourth century B.C. historians, we know that Xenophon and Theopompus literally continued Thucydides's unfinished work; Ephorus drew from it for his large-scale compilation and that Philistius was "the most determined imitator of Thucydides in antiquity."¹⁸ Toward the end of the century, we have the work of Hieronymus, which is organized by campaigning season, also features the absence of the gods, and pursues deeper causes. For these reasons Simon Hornblower labels Hieronymus "Thucydides's real successor."¹⁹ Given the historical context, this level of attention indicates that Thucydides's work was indeed an "immediate

sensation.”²⁰ By the time Polybius, the so-called faux Thucydides, wrote in the second century B.C., he has been aptly described as a “pro.”²¹

The act of continuing not only presupposes respect for what Thucydides accomplished (as Thucydides largely showed toward Herodotus), but also that there was something that was appropriate to be continued. Herodotus, Thucydides’s predecessor, told the story of a great conflict, a clash of civilizations in which the “right” side won. It is not clear what it would mean to continue Herodotus’s work or even if such continuation would be appropriate. There was, by definition, no precedent as to what one did with a work like that of Herodotus, and it is hard to argue that there was a clear cultural precedent for continuing. The epic poem cycles did in a sense continue one another, and the tragic poets generally retold the great old stories. Lyric poems often intermingled the present with the past,²² but these were self-sufficient works meant to stand alone. Certainly if one were to continue the work of Herodotus, the internecine savage and seemingly pointless war between Athens and Sparta, told with a notable absence of great deeds, would not have been the obvious continuation.²³ But Thucydides did continue and did tell the story that he did and, in so doing, opened up the possibility of telling the other non-Herodotean stories that make up history—for instance, the rise and fall of the Spartan Hegemony as told by Xenophon.²⁴ If Xenophon’s narrative, the *Hellenica*, contains more conventional ideas, including a more explicit role for the divine, and if he eventually moves to more of his own style (including abandoning the summer/winter format), this should not obscure the fact that his departure point is Thucydides and that we are discussing him as he diverges from Thucydides.

Restoring the magnificence of Thucydides’s accomplishment is not just a task for philology. Founding a new way of looking at the world is a philosophical accomplishment because it is grounded in disclosing the truth. Other texts could have the seamless texture of Thucydides’s *History*, and such seamlessness may disclose a world (as a great novel does), but Thucydides’s accomplishment was of an entirely different order, an achievement here labeled “founding a world.” Thucydides touches us even now because, despite his seemingly idiosyncratic oversimplification of the world, he has disclosed truths about us, as humans, that continue to resonate. The tragedy of Oedipus is another very odd and alien work that somehow still speaks to us because of its truth. Granted that it is not obvious what truths Thucydides or tragedy succeeded in presenting, but this is partially a result of a later self-presentation of philosophy, particularly of Plato, the other great Athenian prose stylist, also profoundly

influenced by Heraclitus, tragedy, and the decline of Athens. Plato rejects the Heraclitean grounds that are presupposed by both Athenian tragedy and Thucydides's *History*,²⁵ and much of philosophy has followed Plato both in rejecting this tradition and in claiming that its own relationship with truth is privileged.

Nietzsche is the first author I know of who discusses a profound divide between Plato and Thucydides, claiming that Thucydides could serve as a "cure" for all Platonism, which would be no small feat given that, for Nietzsche, "Platonism" is a rough shorthand for all that had gone awry in Western philosophy.²⁶ Typically, though he is deeply suggestive, Nietzsche does not elaborate on how this cure is to work. Chapter 4 and the two philosophical appendixes of this book will seek to provide this elaboration.

Chapters 1 through 3 address the questions of just *what* Thucydides achieved in the first instance and *how*, questions preliminary to whether his text can work a cure. Somewhat paradoxically, seeing this accomplishment, which is preliminary to a cure, also requires that one is already at least partially cured of what, following Nietzsche (if somewhat unfairly), I too will label Platonism. Specifically, we must read Thucydides without looking for essences, not of human nature, or of states, or of constitutions, and we must similarly eschew distilling his narrative into principles that will find their place in a chain of deductions.²⁷ Such a distillation did not much help the Chians in their revolt from Athens. In so refusing, we must also resist the temptation to treat Thucydides's work as somehow adolescent, as striving to achieve the clarity of a modern work of philosophy or the rigor of a modern work of history.²⁸ Though Thucydides's work founded the world in which these modern disciplines have developed, it is a category mistake to retroject these disciplines' current, likely somewhat transitory, criteria of excellence. Indeed, as will be suggested in what follows, Thucydides may well have been successful in founding a world precisely because he operated in a realm free of the jealous territoriality of the modern academy.

Ultimately, as Thucydides makes clear, his is a work about that which is most important, and it is directed toward those with the patience to see what they did not see before. Nietzsche's more recent gloss is that now we are additionally hobbled by thinking we know all about Thucydides when we have instead imported an alien and hostile perspective into his work. Nietzsche does not just associate this hostile perspective with Socrates and with Plato; he describes it as a "morality-and-ideal swindle," one characterized by seeing "reason in reality."²⁹ As a preliminary matter,

it is fairly lucid what this means. For instance, Thucydides is the author of the most harrowing account of the self-dissolution of an ancient polis, namely, of the civil war in Corcyra.³⁰ Already in antiquity this was an influential passage.³¹ Already in antiquity (or sometime not long after) there seems to have been anxiety about its lack of prescriptive content, and so a significant evaluative passage was interpolated in Thucydides's voice.³² Modern scholars have wielded powerful critical tools to derive lessons, reasons, from the snippets of analytical narrative that Thucydides did write. But what if there is no such direct prescription to be had? What if this is like asking what Oedipus could have done to avoid his fate?

Plato's rejection of such a tragic perspective on the polis is manifest, as he deduces the structure of not one but two constitutions from first principles. In his second, the supposedly more practicable polis of the *Laws*, the delicate social norms of mutuality, whose loss Thucydides had chronicled, have been rendered unnecessary, even dangerous.³³ There is no need to rely on such fuzzy contingencies when the polis has been regrounded as, quite literally, mathematically perfect. It will be maintained that, contra Plato, Thucydides is correct to embrace the contingent and not to import reason and morality into his narrative. This is one of the central truths that allowed Thucydides's text to found a world. Of course, this appears to be a very bleak truth. Again, it is Nietzsche who, most famously, insists that it is a truth, when properly understood, that impels us to action, not despair.³⁴ Addressing this well-worn subject is beyond the ambit of this book, except perhaps to add the following point. To the extent that the preservation and cultivation of community require the disclosing, and possibly even the founding, of new worlds, of new ways of being together, then restoring the truth of Thucydides's accomplishment, namely, that he founds a new world through embracing the contingency of community, may be a small step forward.

Theoretical Preliminaries

Wittgenstein's image of the fly-bottle is a powerful tool for explaining what it is that Thucydides's text does and how. Yet, not coincidentally, this image, for all its power, is limited. Wittgenstein deliberately deploys brief images, questions, aphorisms, and even drawings in order quickly to clear up specific philosophical problems and not to conduct a more thorough investigation.³⁵ Hence the introduction of new terms, such as "disclose" as the verb for what Thucydides does for those who enter his fly-bottle, "world" for the space in the fly-bottle in which we find ourselves,

and “found” for when the world that has been disclosed has proven so resilient and expansive that it has comfortably absorbed generation after generation of readers. The argument of this book can thus be restated as answering the following question: *How does Thucydides’s text possess the world-disclosive power required to found a world?*

The notion of a text disclosing a world may suggest that what will be offered is some sort of psychological reading (i.e., here is what Thucydides *does* to his readers). Yet we will not be interested in excavating Thucydides’s mental states, and neither will we be interested in the presumed mental states of his audience, including those of the later historians who continued his work.³⁶ No doubt Thucydides does profitably conflate form and content. For instance, though quite capable of writing a lucid narrative, Thucydides allows his narrative to get confused in its account of a battle that was confused.³⁷ No doubt this isomorphism has an effect on readers, perhaps even an effect that is entirely deliberate, though such an argument is generally difficult to cash out in specific instances because the open-endedness of Thucydides’s text is such that revisionist readings can almost always find traction. Still, Thucydides’s conflation of form and content is central to the *akribeia* (precision) he is aiming for, and scholars influenced by reader response theory are right to claim that Thucydides’s style presupposes an audience of patient hearers and readers. But even granting these claims and an emotional impact on readers, are we any closer to understanding Thucydides’s unique accomplishment? Ion the rhapsode moves his audience, the Hippocratic doctors pursue *akribeia*, Gorgias takes wordplay to new heights (or lows), and the Athenians adore verbal gamesmanship to such a degree that Thucydides’s own Cleon rebukes them. Not one of these ingredients, or even all of them together, can explain the world-founding function of Thucydides’s text, and explaining this power is the task of this book.³⁸ World foundation ain’t in the head. Thucydides’s work represents a meta-physical event in which we all now partake whether we, as individuals, have read Thucydides or not.

What is meant here by “metaphysical”? The new world disclosed by Thucydides’s text is not a physical world.³⁹ Rather, in this context, a world is a boundless sphere of significant engagement. The “world of the theater” captures the sense I am aiming at, but only for someone who lives in that world. If taken backstage, I, as an outsider, would see everything as strange, or at least new, and there would be much that I would not understand and more still that I would not even see at all (say, nuances in the lighting). An actor would not even notice the oddities that

strike me (say, the flimsiness of the props) and would engage with cues that I would miss; this is just the space in which she lives and works. Most worlds we live in predate us, and we are initiated into them seamlessly – in most cases we are not even aware of being there (e.g., one does not remember that one lives in the “world of the driver” until one has to teach someone else). Every once in a while, we actively and consciously engage in joining a world – say, when we learn how to drive. A world, which was always there, is then dis-closed to us; that is, a series of connections and meanings that were always there but hidden to us are suddenly opened up. Very rarely, we are drawn into disclosing a new world; new political movements or technological innovations are helpful paradigms of this phenomenon. To take a somewhat limited example, I grew up using a typewriter but am now so absorbed in the world of the personal computer that I cannot even imagine writing a letter, much less a book, without a computer. Indeed, the personal computer has changed the way I think, and I could not function the same way without it. Once one is in a world, the world appears to have always already been there.⁴⁰

Related to the notion of “world,” in what follows “language” will generally be replaced by “logos.” Logos expresses a great deal more than language. Logos reveals, first, that we are the creatures who *argue*, though not necessarily logically. Second, even more importantly, logos relates to the *ordering* in which we live. The rhythm of the chorus or the reckoning of a monetary account, for instance, may not fall within language, but they are within logos, as they are part of the ordering that creates significance within our world.⁴¹ Throughout this book I will be careful not to claim that ancient writers naively conflated distinct concepts. The Greeks thought about logos, about ordering the world, not language, and their supposedly naive conflation may instead reflect a profound insight into the connectedness of notions that we moderns have torn asunder. Specifically, logos, especially as used by Heraclitus and implicitly used by Thucydides, may refer to a notion of world-ordering that we moderns have difficulty seeing, particularly as we cling to logos as language, where language has simple referential propositions as its paradigm. It is indeed hard to understand how a series of referential propositions could disclose a world. If our paradigm for logos were instead a play of Sophocles, then the world-disclosive power of logos is easier to grasp.

A work, author, or invention is *foundational* if it discloses a world that is epochal; one might think here of the works of Newton or of Freud. There are important family resemblances between disclosing the world of driving and the world of gravity; they are spheres of significance into

which a person may or may not be initiated. One key difference is quantitative, though to such an extent that it becomes qualitative. This is to say that the founding of a new world affects many worlds, including those that seem completely separate, and does so over and over again. The new world founded by Newton also affects what we think about periods in the past that might otherwise have been considered closed; that is, the impact of founding a new world stretches behind us. An easy example of this power to revise is that of Freud's treatment of Oedipus. Perhaps the most important difference between disclosing and founding a world is that the worlds of driving or of the theater are in some sense entirely contingent because they are worlds that need never have existed and that no one ever need enter, whereas, though the discovery of gravity or psychology is contingent, their effects in the world are not. Gravity governs us whether we know it or not, hence the awesome power of disclosing that it is governing us. The claim of this book is that Thucydides's *History* is foundational, though not because it discloses historical laws analogous to gravity.

There are at least two different ways of being foundational, and so, for instance, Freud is not foundational in the same sense as Newton. A newly unearthed work of Newton would be a treasure for historians of science but almost certainly not for practicing physicists living in the world Newton made possible. In a sense, then, Newton's work founded modern physics but, like the *Physics* of Aristotle, is no longer part of the world of physics. A new work by Freud would presumably be of interest to practicing psychoanalysts. Thucydides's text is foundational in this second way. A newly discovered book by Thucydides would be of interest not only to philologists and ancient historians, but also to historians and political scientists working on enormously different eras and issues.⁴²

This allows us to return to the questions posed by Herodotus and by Thucydides's successors. While Thucydides's work was foundational, Herodotus's text was *original*. The existence of Herodotus's text in fact strengthens the claim that Thucydides's text is foundational. One cannot just begin at the beginning; rather, there must always be that from which one begins. This is especially true in this case, when part of what is to be disclosed is that there must be a continuation. Thucydides, as is well known, begins from Herodotus, whose work is a less radical break from the oral tradition whence they both emerged.⁴³ Not that Herodotus is not original, just that many more of the features of his text point backwards rather than forwards. The world of Herodotus is new but ultimately far more familiar. For instance, in Herodotus, there is the central role of the gods, the importance of women, the recording of alternate traditions, and in

general the absence of a passion for revealing the contradictory functioning of the *logos*.⁴⁴ Put another way, Herodotus's text is less totalizing.⁴⁵ Further, as mentioned previously, Herodotus's work is not open-ended; there is no particular reason for other similar works to be written (unless there are similarly great deeds to be rescued from oblivion). Hunter thus describes history as a static continuum in Herodotus, in contrast to the dynamism of Thucydides.⁴⁶ This contrast is reflected in the identity of the primary actors in Herodotus, namely, individuals of strong personality, many of whom have the same personality. In contrast, Thucydides not only deemphasizes personality (though not entirely and certainly not a recurring hubristic personality), but introduces the polis as an actor and gives it, especially Athens, internal structure.⁴⁷ This no doubt is to some extent a product of the means by which the texts were produced. Herodotus's work is generally seen as an oral work set to writing, and the selection of form and content had as much to do with internal consistency as with pleasing the immediate audience.⁴⁸ In this connection, it seems most accurate to say that Herodotus introduces us to the vibrant world in which he actually lived, while Thucydides, with his more totalizing technology (namely, writing), creates a new world, one in which no one had lived before and one in which no one could live (exclusively, like the world created by Descartes's methodological solipsism).

As an analogy for the relationship between Thucydides and Herodotus proposed here, one may consider the relationship of Kepler and Galileo with Newton. Kepler and then Galileo first collected and articulated the revolutionary data and ideas that toppled both Aristotelian physics and the geocentric model of the universe. Without their originality, Newton's foundational work would not have been possible.⁴⁹

As for Thucydides's successors, as has already been noted, it is clear that Xenophon and other fourth century B.C. historians saw Thucydides's work not only as a model but as a model to be continued. Xenophon continues the Thucydidean tradition of narrating contemporary military and political events. In the *Hellenica*, Xenophon even attempts to go beyond these events and to articulate the *telos* toward which all these wars are pointing, namely, the unifying of Greece under a hegemon that could then fight Persia.⁵⁰ The failure to reach this *telos* accounts for the "tragic" element of the *Hellenica*. The events are "tragic" rather than *tragic* because they are sad, but not quite *tragic* in the manner of the tragedians of the fifth century B.C. (as discussed later), though even this signals an understanding that he is following Thucydides. Xenophon, even and especially in his shortcomings, is operating in the space opened up by Thucydides.

Short Outline

This book will proceed along two main paths. First, the key steps into the fly-bottle will be explored, and this, naturally, will begin with how Thucydides begins his work. Also, as already foreshadowed in our discussion of the passage about the Chians, we will explore the view from within the fly-bottle, giving attention to the consistency, density, ubiquity, open-endedness, familiarity, and significance of the text. Without these features, we would have seen through the ruse to get us into the fly-bottle long ago.

Yet this initial textual analysis is only part of the story. Thucydides is, after all, successful in his seduction, and explaining this requires not only laying out the bare facts of how his text operates, but also explaining *why* these facts are so seductive. Returning to the image of the fly-bottle, we know that flies are drawn to sugar. What is the draw in Thucydides's text? And why does the draw seem to be timeless? What could be so nourishing? To answer these questions, we will deepen our analysis by considering one of the families of *topoi* with which Thucydides seduces us, namely, that of Attic tragedy. Though other *topoi* and arguments, such as those derived from medicine and rhetoric, are important, none are so crucial in this regard as those derived from tragedy. Of course, this presupposes a stance on what tragedy is and how it operates, which is no simple thing. Thus, there is a crucial transition through tragedy in Chapter 3. This excursus will identify and explain which aspects of tragedy Thucydides radicalizes; these are the aspects associated with the word *deinon* (the "dreadable").

In Chapter 4, we discuss why these aspects are so attractive and so potent. This discussion, insofar as it relates to language and to temporality, is more explicitly philosophical. There have already been philosophical discussions of Thucydides and language, as well as of Thucydides and time, especially under the more general rubric of questions of "historical explanation" and the nature of time more generally. As with every other aspect of the literature on Thucydides, these discussions are too numerous to be dealt with individually, though there are some general trends that can be identified. The more general works, in which Thucydides often (oddly) does not figure prominently, do not do justice to the complexity of his thought.⁵¹ The work that has been done more precisely on Thucydides tends to treat philosophical issues in an ad hoc manner.⁵² This is to say that philosophical theories are taken off the shelf as needed, and philosophical issues are not placed in a larger philosophical problematic.

Given the intensity of academic specialization, such piecemeal incorporation is inevitable and is often very fruitful. Chapters 1 through 3, for instance, often rely on the textual analysis of others, just as Chapter 4 relies on the philosophical arguments of others. There is also, quite reasonably, a general distrust of broad philosophical systems. Nevertheless, there are surely benefits to a broader and systematic philosophical approach, most notably the ability to give an account of a phenomenon (in this case, the text of Thucydides) that is applicable to other phenomena and is determined by clear assumptions and arguments that can themselves be challenged. It seems especially incongruous to approach Thucydides's work without the benefit of a philosophical problematic that does not consider history, especially its own history, as posing important questions. We therefore do not approach the philosophical issues raised by Thucydides's appropriation of tragic language and temporality *ex nihilo*. There is an ongoing discussion of the metaphysical import of Thucydides, and it is to this discussion (between Nietzsche and Heidegger) that we will address the results of our analysis of Thucydides and of tragedy. This philosophical discussion leads us back to Heraclitus, and it is at Heraclitus's extant aphorisms that we hit bedrock and "our spade will be turned."⁵³ It is in Heraclitus that we find the most succinct presentation of the metaphysics presented in Attic Tragedy and radicalized by Thucydides in his disclosure of a new world. Succinctness is not always a virtue, and there are also appendixes in which the philosophical stance on time, language, and history on which Chapter 4 relies are spelled out – not in full, but in much greater detail.

Thucydides's Vision

Introduction – Six Features of Thucydides's Text

This chapter focuses primarily on how it is that Thucydides begins a work that discloses a world. The beginning represents the essence of the conjuring trick; it is the lip of the fly-bottle and so it must entice, even as it is comfortably familiar, while all the while it is a step into something very different. Yet before we can lay out the first steps into the fly-bottle, we must have a better grasp of what it is like within or we will not know when we have entered. Our first task then is to identify the features of Thucydides's text that are world-disclosing.

For this task, we first return to Chios and to the passage with which we began:

After this [battle], the Chians [now under siege] no longer came out against [the Athenians], though the Athenians ravaged their land, their land being well stocked and untouched from the time of the Persian wars until now. For, next to the Spartans, I have observed only the Chians being both fortunate [verbal form of *eudaimonia*] and moderate [verbal form of *sophrosune*], and to the extent that their polis prospered, to that extent they ordered [their polis] more securely. And even as regards this revolt, [for people] might think they did it contrary to the safer path, but they did not dare to do it until they would be putting themselves in danger with many good allies and observing that, after the disaster in Sicily, not even the Athenians themselves denied any longer that their affairs were entirely and certainly desperate. And if [the Chians] were overthrown by that which is unexpected [*paralogos*] in human life, they held the opinion [*gnome*] that was in error [*hamartia*] with many others who thought the same things, that the [power] of Athens would be quickly and utterly destroyed.¹

The world-disclosive features of this passage are its density, consistency, ubiquity, open-endedness, familiarity, and significance. For all of these terms their standard and traditional meaning is the primary sense intended here. These terms are being introduced to give greater articulation to the otherwise brute (and uncontested) fact of the consistency of Thucydides's text.

The overall consistency of Thucydides's text is so profound that, as mentioned previously, perceived inconsistencies are sure grounds for textual criticism. The lack of speeches in Book Eight, along with the repetitions ("doublets" in the jargon of Thucydides scholars), the text of several versions of the same treaty, all suggest that this is not Thucydides's completed work.² This is despite the fact that we do know that Thucydides lived through the end of the war and revised other portions of the work. The fact that Book Eight ends in midsentence, seven years before the end of the war (an end identified by Thucydides earlier in the text), does suggest, though not conclusively,³ that Thucydides would have written more had he had time, but it surely does not prove that he ever would have returned to revise what we know of as Book Eight. There is, in any case, a distinction between "unfinished" and "incomplete." The *History* may be unfinished; it is not incomplete.

The scholarly consensus that Book Eight (and to a lesser extent Book Five) is not in its finished form, in contrast, say, to Books Six and Seven (the narrative about the Sicilian Expedition), is a result of the power of the style and the analysis that is present everywhere else such that seemingly small deviations appear to yield conclusive evidence of incompleteness or, in the context of "dating" different parts of the work, of having been written by Thucydides at different times. It is likely that Thucydides wrote his work over decades, and it would be surprising if there were no traces of this in the text. Nevertheless, our brief passage, like all of Book Eight, is inimitably Thucydidean. As decades of scholarly debate have shown, except for a few passages, there is no way to pick apart the unity of Thucydides's text without making hypersubtle distinctions and challengeable assumptions.⁴

The task here is not to introduce new terms as a means of making progress towards deciphering the "mind of Thucydides." Rather, worlds are more than generally consistent, and Thucydides's text is more than generally consistent as well, hence the need for more refined terminology, but not too refined, since these terms are meant to function as heuristic devices, not an end in themselves.⁵

The first feature I wish to highlight in the passage about Chios is its *density*, which refers to the amount of significant detail. For instance, in this passage even the time frame in which Chios has been spared war is significant. A precondition for the achievement of density is the deployment of sophisticated narrative devices, such as repetition of structures, and the unusual vocabulary, use of which is a well-known feature of Thucydides's text.⁶ *Consistency* refers to certain ideas and arguments encountered, often without contradiction, in different contexts, such as the general difficulty of judging Athenian power or the importance of capital for a navy. *Ubiquity* refers to how certain ideas are presented, not just consistently and with a wealth of detail, but how they are presented relentlessly. So, for instance, in our passage, the Chian understanding that its main hope of success lies in getting fellow subjects to join in its revolt is a common argument throughout the *History*. Thucydides's account of the revolt of Chios is *open-ended* precisely because it does not state what exactly has been misjudged about Athens and why. The text presents an important puzzle and through its density, consistency, and ubiquity suggests answers, but it does not just give them to us. This effect is partially created through the development of inconsistencies. In our passage, for instance, the Chians are presented as united, a polis at peace with itself even though Thucydides also provides us with indications of divisions within the polis, both before and after our passage.⁷ Though both are crucial and ubiquitous, there is an exegetical priority to consistency over inconsistency, which is to say that the tension over the nature of the Chian government is played out only against the background of a consistent depiction of the benefit and power of good government.

The text by this point has achieved *familiarity* because the concerns and plans of the Chians are to be expected. In a broader sense, the text has achieved familiarity insofar as we can read this narrative and understand its gist with relative ease and not wonder at its strangeness. In fact, we can readily use the Chians in arguments and analogies, not unlike the way we can use the technology around us without considering, much less understanding, how it is that a given tool, say a laptop with an Internet connection, is readily available to us for research of a type that would have been unimaginable not very long ago. Since we understand the reasoning of this remote group of people and appreciate its ultimate consequences for them, the text is *significant*. The Chians enjoyed both good fortune (*eudaimonia*) and moderation (*sophrosune*), and their mistake (*hamartia*) concerned an event somehow beyond reasoning (*paralogos*). The Chians

as a collective have thus been given a character that has been manifested through time and is now to meet its literally tragic destiny.⁸

This last feature, significance, in a sense subsumes all of the others, as there could not be significance, the defining feature of a world, without these other features. This is to say that significance relies on density, consistency, ubiquity, open-endedness, and familiarity to create the dramatic situation in which the fate of the Chians matters. However, the finer the articulation, the better the argument, and since significance is indeed greater than the sum of its parts, it is listed as a sixth feature even though it should be best understood as in a different category than the other five. These textual features, admittedly somewhat rough and ready, are easily recognized within the *History*; they are also the features of a world, with being on the inside of a specific fly-bottle.

This finer articulation makes the riddle posed by Thucydides's opening passages more pressing. After all, Thucydides's project is to disclose something new. What is there for his text to be consistent with, much less from what is he to construct his dense and ubiquitous references and themes? Whither the significance and how, in only a few steps, can we enter an enclosed space that is also open in all directions?

Through our close reading of the opening sections of the *History* we will see that, remarkably, Thucydides both draws us into a new world and intimates that he is doing so. Insofar as these explicit disclosive claims have been overlooked, the most obvious reason is that we still live largely in the sway of the world Thucydides disclosed, and so there is nothing remarkable to be noted. Also, familiarity presupposes that the means of disclosure remain in the background. Yet there is another reason, which involves the relatively recent intellectual currents of the previous few centuries. Whether Thucydides is seen as a doctor of human nature⁹ or even just seen from a philosophical perspective that views language only as a tool for describing the world versus creating new ones,¹⁰ his extensive and explicit claims about the radical newness of his project are domesticated. In Appendix I we will go through some of the most oft-discussed phrases within the *Archaeology* in order to restore to them their disclosive force.

The First Sentence

The first twenty-three sections of Thucydides's first book are generally known as the work's "Archaeology" because they discuss times in the more

distant past.¹¹ The opening sentence of the work clearly echoes that of Herodotus, a first illusory indication that we are entering the familiar.¹² Here is Thucydides:

Thucydides, an Athenian, composed (*sungraphein*) the war of the Peloponnesians and the Spartans as they warred against one another, beginning to write immediately (*euthus*) at the outset, and expecting it would be great and most worthy of relation (*axiologatos*) than any that had preceded it.¹³

And Herodotus:

This is the display (*apodeixis*) of the inquiries (*historia*) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus; so that neither the happenings of men become faded through time, nor great and wondrous deeds, some displayed (verbal form of *apodeixis*) by the Hellenes, some by the Barbarians, become unsung (*akleos*), and, among other things [to be preserved], on what ground/charge (*aitia*) they warred with one another.

In both sentences we have the introduction of a specific author and a contemporary topic (a great war) and, shortly thereafter, a justification for the work. There can be (and there has been) little doubt that the work of Herodotus forms the background for Thucydides's work.

Yet there are immediate and profound differences between the two sentences. Crucially, Thucydides does not use the same verb to describe what he is about to do; he uses the verb *sungraphein*. Most obviously, the different word reflects the different media of the two works. Herodotus's work was crafted for an oral audience and then written down. Herodotus describes his task as to display (*apodeixis*) the great deeds that the Greeks and Barbarians have already displayed so that these deeds do not fade and do not go unsung (*akleos*). Thucydides's work is a self-conscious piece of writing aimed at readers interested in the composition of a war most worthy of relation.

Herodotus's work is a product of research in the sense of *historein*, which is what Herodotus, as a sophisticated traveler and observer, has compiled for his listeners. Thucydides's word, *sungraphein*, has a more technical feel, and the technique it is meant to indicate is discussed explicitly later in Thucydides's Archaeology. The technicality is communicated not only through the medium of writing, but through the *sun* ("with") prefix. Adam Parry sums up the thrust of *sungraphein* as "marshaled the sundry factors of the war, and composed them into a meaningful whole."¹⁴ Mark Munn has noted that in contemporary usage, including within Thucydides's text, *sungraphein* refers to technical research on

the past, especially on laws, which was an especially important political activity at the end of the fifth century B.C.¹⁵ Thucydides also uses this verb to describe the work of another predecessor, one whom he explicitly names (and belittles), Hellanicus, whose work was on the ancient myths of Attica and their connection to modern Athens. The verb *sungraphein* thus operates to separate this work from that of Herodotus, even as it is itself familiar.¹⁶ Thucydides adopts a similar polemical stance toward Hellanicus. Even though Thucydides is explicitly critical of Hellanicus, he does use the same verb to describe what they both are doing. Thus Thucydides is both demonstrating connections with these and other precedents even as he is asserting and performing¹⁷ that he is doing something different.¹⁸

The question then posed is: how to translate *sungraphein*, Thucydides's self-descriptive verb of choice, especially in the opening sentence? The two current standard translations in English (i.e., those of Crawley and Warner) both render *sungraphein* as "wrote the history of." This translation connects the entire sentence with Herodotus and captures some of the special technical work that this verb clearly implies. Nevertheless, this translation is misleading because it downplays the difference from Herodotus that this verb in particular is meant to convey, especially that this work was written to be read. Hence Crane and Blanco translate *sungraphein* as "wrote up," which fixes this problem but loses the connection with Herodotus.

We do not need to be overly concerned about the best overall translation, as there probably is not one. The standard title, *History of Peloponnesian War*, abbreviated as the *History*, grates because it domesticates a work that is manifestly not to be understood as a traditional product of academic history. It seems better to label the work the *Composition of the War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, as "compose" is not only a reasonable, though hardly perfect, one-word translation of *sungraphein*, but also captures the fact that what we have is a technical bringing together of disparate elements. A composition need not be completed, of course, and insofar as it is unusual for a composition to be apparently incomplete and to be about a war, this defamiliarizing is appropriate. However, insofar as labeling Thucydides's work the *History* is both a venerable and a useful convention, this will be the label used in this book despite its limitations.

It is also worthwhile to note the different personas of the narrators introduced in these sentences. Thucydides introduces himself not only as an Athenian (and one who, we will learn, was actually involved in the war), but also as one who describes himself as he will later describe Athenians

in general (e.g., by the Corinthians) and Themistocles in particular.¹⁹ That is, Thucydides expected immediately (*euthus*) that this war would be great and acted on this belief – indeed, perceived and acted through logos. Herodotus the narrator, though clearly a Greek who shows his Greek sensibilities throughout his work, does not introduce nearly so specific and narratively central an ethos into his first sentence.²⁰

Herodotus's topic is a war, and so is that of Thucydides. Yet Herodotus is presenting his researches into that war to preserve great deeds from oblivion. No doubt this in the end is not the only goal of Herodotus's work, but this very traditional preserving of the great deeds is his stated justification. Thucydides's chosen justification is a departure from this. The war he has composed is *axiologotatos* – “most worthy of logos,” and specifically more worthy of logos than any that had gone before. With this word, Thucydides signals that he judges the war he has composed to be most worthy not only of speech and writing (both his own and that of others), but also of reckoning and *relating*, and this is in contrast to Herodotus, whose focus is on preserving what is worthy of praise.²¹ Thucydides is literally bringing the Peloponnesian War into circulation;²² in Thucydides's work it does business with the Trojan War and the Persian War, but Thucydides's work itself creates the possibility of ongoing relations (especially with other wars). Thucydides is ubiquitous even now, both during the Cold War and after. Whereas Thucydides's narrative of the clash between two rival political alliances resonated very strongly less than two decades ago, what resonates so strongly now is his treatment of the relationship between democracy and empire.

In explicating how it is that Thucydides's *History* is most worthy of relating, we should note what happens in Book Five at the point at which Thucydides reflects, briefly, on what he has created thus far.²³ There is no more mention of Homer or echoing of Herodotus, but only an insistence on the connection of the fighting to follow with that which Thucydides has *already* narrated. The Sicilian Expedition that is to come, though it will be rife with Homeric (and tragic) resonances,²⁴ will ultimately be more profoundly narrated against the background of the Egyptian Expedition, the Plague, Pylos, and, of course, the Melian Dialogue. For instance, there is nothing in Homer to explain or compare with the Athenians' inability to subvert an enemy city that is already a democracy. Thucydides has thus *already* disclosed a world, and the remainder of his narrative operates within it. Logos is the ordering of human worlds. A war most worthy of logos is most capacious, though not all-encompassing, in terms of human concerns.

The Archaeology

In the first sentence, the claim is both made and performed that the work that follows should be familiar (at least as familiar as that of Herodotus), but also radically different. There are, of course, many other features of the Archaeology that are familiar. After all, Thucydides does insist, repeatedly, on the *greatness* of the war he will narrate. In rhetorical terms, it is an *auxesis* (a “buildup”).²⁵ Indeed, the opening sections break down nicely into a ring composition, a familiar narrative form that continually returns to the theme of the greatness of this war.²⁶ Furthermore, in making this case, Thucydides incorporates numerous other traditional elements of *auxesis* from discussion of the size of battles to the magnitude of the suffering. He even includes natural events such as earthquakes and, of course, the Plague.

And yet here too there are deep differences. First, there is Thucydides's emphasis on the relative preparation of the two sides and that his war is notable for the superiority of the preparation. At first this claim seems innocuous enough, but already by the end of the Archaeology, that is, after reading a little further, this claim becomes far more important, indeed consistently found as an issue in every aspect of the conflict. As is well known, the Archaeology presents us with the argument that preparation in terms of public capital and naval experience, as demonstrated through great expeditions, is exactly what the past never exhibited to any large extent.²⁷ To accept this claim about the unparalleled preparation of the two sides, primarily of Athens, is then seemingly to accept, at least as comprehensible and plausible, a host of other claims about political, economic, and military development. These claims have not yet been made in the text and never are explicitly. There is also little question that they are not obvious, nor is there really any precedent for them.

This brings us to another key term in the claim that the war was the greatest, and that is the notion of a movement (*kinesis*). In his opening passage Thucydides claims that there has never been such a *kinesis* among the Greeks (and beyond).²⁸ There has been a lot of discussion of what this term means here.²⁹ For our purposes, what is crucial to emphasize is how much more this means than a recording of great deeds or even great suffering. There was great movement, period – political changes within cities, shifting alliances without (some, like that between Sparta and Persia, presumably unthinkable at the start of the war), the seeming end of a certain historical movement (i.e., the rise of Athens), as well as the (related) seeming end of a way of life in Greece in general. All

of these movements are either explicitly mentioned or clearly intimated without the literal movements of people and earth, which there were as well.³⁰

But perhaps most striking of all is that Thucydides will *argue* that his war is the greatest. If the verb *sungraphein* and the superlative justifying the work (*axiologotatos*) were not sufficient to convince one that Thucydides's world is a world governed by logos, then surely the almost immediately polemical nature of the text should be sufficient. Thucydides takes on his predecessors, often unfairly, and advocates for his methodology. It could be objected here that glorifying one's method is itself a commonplace, though perhaps not as much in Herodotus, but in rhetoric, both in set pieces and in forensic oratory. Ian Plant, for instance, draws a specific analogy between Thucydides and the rhetoricians Gorgias and Antiphon.³¹ Here is Plant's translation of key passages on method from Antiphon:

Moreover, I am presenting you with arguments which are probable, and evidence which is consistent with the arguments and facts which are consistent with the evidence, and proof from the facts themselves, and in addition to these the two greatest and strongest arguments. . . .³²

and from Gorgias:

I want to support my argument with some reasoning and put a stop to the criticism of the woman who is being slandered, by both demonstrating that those who criticize her are lying and revealing the truth, to put a stop to ignorance.³³

and here is Thucydides on his method (my translation):

For people receive hearsay concerning the past, even their own past, indiscriminately, without applying a test [. . .] I thought it worthy not to write [up] the deeds/events [*erga*] that had been done in the war through trusting whomever or whatever was at hand, [I did not even trust] how things seem to me, but both for those at which I was present and [also those from which I learned] from others, I endeavored to achieve precision on each [deed/event] as much as possible. I discovered through toil because those who were present at a deed/event did not say the same things concerning it, but it was [reported to me] as each held some favor [for one side] or some memory. And it will seem perhaps that the absence of the traditional storytelling elements [makes my work] less pleasurable, but whoever will wish to see a clarity of the things that have happened and will happen once again as such or similarly to such, according to the human – for [these] to judge these things helpful would be sufficient.³⁴

This is an important comparison, and it places Thucydides firmly within a contemporary intellectual tradition exploring the power of logos; Thucydides founded a world of history, not the whole vibrant intellectual

world of the Sophists. Nevertheless, what follows in Thucydides is not an account of one event or a defense of one individual, but an extended narrative spanning decades, one that not only includes speeches but lacks any particular interest in recording alternative accounts or research problems and successes. Thucydides describes and justifies his method, and then proceeds with his magisterial narrative and does not return to his method again. In a court case, one's method is justified to the extent that it wins the day. What is the measure of Thucydides's method, of his relation to logos, except for the creation of a world, of something worthy of reckoning?

This is not to say that Thucydides's statement of method is "mere" rhetoric, that he did not cross-examine witnesses and endeavor to find out what really happened, as we would conventionally understand that to mean. To the contrary, it is assumed that this is exactly what Thucydides did, and so the question is why, given his evident pride in his method, do we not hear more about it? It is not as if Thucydides never shares with us the actual research problems he encountered, just rarely (especially in comparison with Herodotus).³⁵ The argument here is that such discussion would obtrude on the clarity that Thucydides creates through his method; the *History* is not about its own novel method of its composition. The polemics used to justify the method are one aspect of the polemical world into which the text initiates us. This isomorphism between the structure of the real world of armies and cities, especially Athens, and the more rarefied world of Thucydides defining himself against his predecessors and contemporaries is a crucial way in which we readers of Thucydides find ourselves in his fly-bottle, able to see for millennia in all directions, but limited to a particular perspective nevertheless.

The fact that the method itself recedes into the background is necessary if this new world is to be familiar, and thus a world at all. Familiarity results from more than the fact that Thucydides simply does not tell us about his method and the methodological challenges that he faced along the way. This "recession" is also a product of other features emerging into the foreground and doing so clearly. For instance, the consistency and ubiquity of Thucydides's analysis of the Athenian Empire are such that long before we arrive at the Chian revolt, we understand immediately the extent to which tribute and ships are the basis of Athenian power. No justification is needed.

The extent of Thucydides's initial polemics as regards his relation to his predecessors, particularly Homer, can hardly be understated. In downplaying the size of the Trojan Expedition and thus demonstrating

by extension the exaggerations of poets in general, Thucydides actually estimates the number of men on the Trojan Expedition based on Homer. According to Thucydides, even with Homer's inflated numbers, this expedition was rather small. Thucydides does not actually carry out the calculation in the text – he just estimates the number of men per type of ship – but when commentators carry out the multiplication, they demonstrate, rightly, that even in Thucydides's time this expedition would have been enormous.³⁶

Yet it would be far too simple to conclude that Thucydides would go to any lengths to denigrate his predecessors and establish his own superiority. Right before this dubious attack on Homer, and by the dubious means just discussed, Thucydides used his powerful polemics toward a defense of Homer. In this passage, Thucydides actually digresses from his argument that his war is the greatest in order to note that he is not discounting the size of the Trojan War simply because Mycenae was a small and insignificant place in his own time. After all, Thucydides reasons, if Athens and Sparta were to be abandoned, one would come to an erroneous conclusion about their relative strength (i.e., Athens, with its great public monuments, would seem stronger, while agrarian Sparta would seem much weaker). Not only does Thucydides defend Homer here, but he uses an *eikos* argument (i.e., an argument from probability), a familiar rhetorical strategy, based on a thought experiment (i.e., what if Athens and Sparta were deserted at some point in the future?).³⁷ It is after this defense that Thucydides analyzes Homer's numbers and shows that the Trojan expedition was small, and he does so by employing two more *eikos* arguments (e.g., how many nonrowers were on the ships?).³⁸ Of course, as already mentioned, Thucydides does not actually present the grand total, which would have made the expedition quite large. Thucydides's relation with Homer is polemical but, in its own peculiar way, balanced.³⁹

As we will see over and over again, an exegetical point we have made about Thucydides is actually an internal point Thucydides makes himself,⁴⁰ which also demonstrates the ubiquity and consistency characteristic of a world. Consider his analysis of the name "Greek." As part of his larger argument concerning the weakness of Greece in the past, Thucydides argues that there was not even a name for Greece as a whole, which suggests how little the Greeks could have accomplished together.⁴¹ Thucydides's best evidence is that there is no such name in all of Homer;⁴² moreover, there is no name for the opposite of a Greek, that is, a "barbarian." How could there be a notion of Greekness, Thucydides reasons, if there was no notion of non-Greekness? Just as the significance of this

word relies on the vitality of its opposite, Thucydides's text relies on that of his predecessors.⁴³ Wherever one looks (and this also goes to density), one consistently finds significance maintained through polemical relationships.

In his analysis of the state of Greece based on its name, Thucydides neither merely describes a situation nor appeals to Homer, but he argues on the basis of Homer. Moreover, the treatment accorded to Homer is *precise* (*akribeia*). Thucydides is not reading Homer in general, but he takes into account the details of Homer's vocabulary, counts the number of ships (even divides them into subcategories), and analyzes seemingly minor descriptions (e.g., Agamemnon could not have been a king over *many* islands without having a standing navy of some sort). The analysis of Homer here stands in a polemical relationship both to Thucydides's attitude toward Homer elsewhere and to "what everyone knows about Thucydides's rigor." Thucydides relies here upon an impugned ancient witness to establish weighty claims about the distant past, which is supposedly an example of his credulity, even in comparison to Herodotus.⁴⁴ Our analysis to this point already indicates the extent to which such a dismissal of Thucydides's analysis misses the point. Thucydides's tortured treatment of Homer and the rest of the more distant past is an integral part of creating his new world as one that is both familiar and strikingly different. Thucydides is changing the distant past everyone thought they knew in terms of a recent past they have yet to comprehend. Seeing such a new world also requires a new method; Thucydides's close reading of Homer's text is an initiation into that method.

The complexity of these initial antitheses should also make one wary of the seemingly simple dichotomies that saturate Thucydides's text, such as *logos-ergon* (word-deed), justice-interest, *gnome-tyche* (reason-chance), and Athenian-Spartan. These antitheses are found densely and consistently and do indeed pose significant questions again and again, but this consistency in the presentation of a polemical relationship does not imply consistency in how that relationship is played out. Indeed, if there is to be continued significance, simple answers to the question of what is being distinguished cannot be possible, and they are certainly not to be found in Thucydides.⁴⁵

As was just demonstrated through the example of Thucydides's treatment of his predecessors, idiosyncrasies of Thucydides's text become easier to understand once their role in world disclosure is understood. The form of Thucydides's work is new. June Allison focuses on the neologisms. Others, like John Finley (and Adam Parry) have discussed his

style. There are a few conclusions that it seems one can safely reach about Thucydides's style. First, it is characterized by a seeming mania for antithesis, along with variations that then unbalance the carefully constructed antitheses.⁴⁶ Second, following Finley, though this style is in many ways uniquely his own, it is also very much a contemporary Athenian style.⁴⁷ In other words, Thucydides is not creating a whole new style, but instead is using the full richness of his inheritance to do something new. Once again, the first steps into the fly-bottle must be familiar and attractive. Both Parry and Finley argue that Thucydides's style is integral to his project; Parry famously and plausibly claims that this project demonstrates the fraught connection between word and world/deed.⁴⁸

It is certainly the case that the antithesis between word and world/deed is present throughout Thucydides. Yet this alone tells us very little. After all, we already have reason to doubt that Thucydides relies on simple antitheses, and certainly his unbalanced use of antitheses confirms this. Thucydides mobilizes the Athenian style, a new style, to narrate something new, namely, the story of the Athenian Empire. Logos is the proper medium for this narration because Athens is the empire of logos. To understand why logos, and particularly Thucydides's logos, is the proper medium for relating the story of the Athenian Empire requires a brief discussion of this empire. All of the aspects to be discussed are, as ever, to be found within Thucydides's text, though, of course, not always spelled out as such. The close, indeed often seamless, connection between what is being narrated and how it is being narrated is the point that needs to be emphasized. Without this thorough isomorphism, including a thorough fascination with isomorphism, Thucydides's work could not have so rapidly achieved the openness characteristic of a world. Rather than bemoan the chasm between word and deed, Thucydides is disclosing (and exploiting) the truth that there is no such chasm.

The Empire of Logos

Athens was the city and then the empire of logos, which is to say that logos is implicated in Athenian history and life to such an extent that it can hardly be done justice in this brief summary.⁴⁹ The whole rise of Athens, as told explicitly by Herodotus⁵⁰ and implicitly by Thucydides (as we will see), is related to logos. This goes beyond the obvious role of logos as public discourse and its role in a democracy; the logos of Athens, in terms of its structure, had to change before there could be a democracy in which logos as public speech thrived. A central example of the

reordering of Athens is that of Cleisthenes's reordering of the Athenians themselves into the ten tribes. The close connection between the type of public speech and the type of public ordering was not lost on ancient thinkers, including Thucydides's Cleon, but also Aristotle and the author of the *Athenian Constitution*.⁵¹ More specifically, *logos*, as ordering of Athenian democracy, allowed for, indeed propelled, the flourishing of *logos* in every possible temporal dimension (and corresponding type of speech), namely, the past through forensic oratory, the present through epideictic oratory, and the future through deliberative oratory.⁵² It is fairly clear why direct democracy put a premium on deliberative speaking, but in Athens a similar premium was put on the two other modes as well. The mass law courts of Athens were as integral to the democracy as the assembly, and their structure, composition, and geographical location communicated this.⁵³ Epideictic oratory, namely, the ritualized praising of Athens through *logos*, was also particularly and self-consciously seen as appropriate for a city in which *logos* was already so central. Hence Loraux's claim that the very fact of the funeral oration was "always already" to have praised Athens.⁵⁴ Indeed, it was a standard feature of funeral orations to note that they represented an "ancient custom" even though they were a relatively recent innovation that celebrated democratic ideology (all the dead are buried together), imperial ideology (an opportunity to celebrate the empire), and imperial necessity (because the needs of empire spread the Athenian dead around the entire Aegean).⁵⁵ Like Thucydides's text, the Athenian Democratic Empire changed the past that everybody knew.⁵⁶

In Attic Tragedy, the preeminent Athenian art form, born with and subsidized by the democracy in a public space for a public festival in which the audience sat according to its political subdivision (i.e., tribe),⁵⁷ *logos* is everywhere.⁵⁸ Again, most obviously, tragedies often involved forensic debates, deliberations, and praise, but they are implicated with *logos* far more thoroughly than this. Insofar as tragedy was a public event, indeed an elite competition, staged before the mass of the people, it paralleled contemporary political life (as described by Ober), especially contemporary life in the courts.⁵⁹ This structure of mass and elite would then often be reduplicated within the dramas themselves, and not only structurally (for instance, the relationship of the chorus to the protagonists), but thematically, as Mark Griffith has illustrated in the context of the *Oresteia*; that is, the House of Atreus and that of Zeus are bound in a kind of elite guest friendship, just like the contemporary intercity elite, such as Pericles, Alcibiades, and Thucydides himself.⁶⁰

To sum up, Athens was the polis in which changes in its logos as internal structure led to dramatic changes in its logos as public speech,⁶¹ which led to still further changes to its internal structure, and these changes tended toward the increase in import and vitality of logos; this was not just a self-reinforcing cycle, but also an expanding one. So far, we have discussed this expansion as it relates to mode of speech and ritual and to art, including a passion for isomorphism and self-reference (often together), but we have only discussed this expansion *within* the polis. The flourishing of logos brings with it power over others, both within the city and without; the external manifestation of the power of Athenian logos was the empire.

Once again, there are clear ways in which logos built the empire, most notably the logos of Themistocles in building and commanding the Athenian navy and also in convincing the Athenians and the other Greeks to accede to his plans. It is probably also not too controversial to note the extent to which logos as organization was key to running an empire, though we will return to this point. However, from our perspective, it seems less intuitive to insist that there was an intimate and consistent connection between the democracy and the empire. The Old Oligarch, now generally seen as roughly contemporaneous with Thucydides,⁶² saw the close connection between Athenian democracy at home and empire abroad, and not only through the connection between the mass of people needed to serve in the navy and political power.⁶³ For instance, just as the Athenian elite were forced to appear before the demos, the subjects of the empire were forced to appear in court before the Athenian demos.⁶⁴ To be a subject of the empire was thus not just to be subject to Athenian deliberative logos, but forensic as well. No doubt the Athenians, probably sincerely and with some justification, celebrated the fact that foreigners had the same access to their courts that any Athenian would have, but this then was to subject these foreigners to Athenian self-praise as well.⁶⁵ To the extent that no other polis had a ritual of self-praise like the funeral oration, it seems fair to say that no other polis ruling over others had such potent justifications.⁶⁶

Logos was implicated still more deeply in the essence of Athenian power, namely, through its navy. Thucydides is especially eager to emphasize the relationship between capital, navies, and power in the Archaeology (and beyond).⁶⁷ Part of the reason for this is not only the obvious one, namely, the centrality of the navy to the empire and the coming war, but also that this is to a considerable extent a novel insight and one not well understood in all of its implications even by those who led the empire,

at least after Pericles. A navy required a level of organization extended through time of an order entirely different from that of an army (at least as the Greeks practiced warfare). This organization went beyond that of building and manning ships; it extended to the generation, preservation, and expenditure of surplus wealth. There also needed to be extensive training and some permanent infrastructure, including expert shipmakers, captains, sailors, and docks. If the navy were to be the basis of an empire, then there had to be safe harbors throughout its domain, especially if the city were to rely on shipments of food from abroad.⁶⁸ Further, if there were to be subject cities – that is, if the navy were to have the ability permanently to take and hold ground (and thus tribute) rather than just defeat other navies – then expertise in siegecraft would have to be developed, again a capital-intensive novelty in the context of Greek warfare.⁶⁹ The Athenian navy, once established, as Thucydides repeatedly emphasizes, was in a sense self-grounding in that it could secure the capital that was essential for its survival. In all of the extraordinary reckoning that the Athenian navy required, a level of reckoning unique in the history of the world so far as Thucydides knew, Athens was ruling through logos.

Of all the developments connected to the development of navy and empire, perhaps the most striking is that of currency.⁷⁰ Merely collecting the wealth of the empire is not itself the creation of the kind of capital required to run a navy. The wealth needs to be easily collected, counted, and expended,⁷¹ and for this the Athenians relied on their famously pure currency. The Athenians eventually required their subjects (in the 440s B.C.)⁷² to pay their tribute in Athenian currency, which was a shrewd practical move, as well as a powerfully symbolic one, which makes it seem even more clever practically. The silver for these coins came from the silver mines at Laurium, the source of the capital for the first navy, the one that Themistocles built and used to defeat the Persians at Salamis. Athenian silver coins were not only themselves autochthonous (i.e., from the land of Attica), but famously pure and all alike, just like the Athenians themselves, according to Athenian ideology.⁷³ Thus Athenian currency, itself a novel symbolic medium and a symbol of the democracy, also incorporated the empire symbolically even as it played a nonsymbolic part in the creation and maintenance of the empire, which itself played a role in the development and maintenance of the democracy. The connection between currency and words in contemporary thinking is well known and, still from our perspective, justified.⁷⁴ Whether one is manipulating words or coins, one is not commanding the things themselves, but using

a universal means of exchange that may relate to the things in question at several steps removed, if at all. Both kinds of manipulation, of course, fall under logos.

The symbolic complexity, and ultimately ruthless consistency, of the Athenian Democratic Empire cannot be understated. The Athenian demos went to the theater to see deliberative, forensic, and epideictic speeches much like those they could hear at an assembly or law court. These speeches were delivered by elite protagonists themselves performing before a demos (the chorus), and the productions themselves were elite events that could have a significant role in interelite competition in the polis. The Athenians were proud of coins that represented their democratic ideology and required that they be used by the subjects of their empire. The Athenians performed the truth that logos in all its forms, as reason, reckoning, ordering, and speech, was at the heart of their way of life, including their empire, by praising themselves through logos, namely, the funeral oration, including praising themselves for having this praise-giving institution! From this perspective, it should be clear why Thucydides's medium had to be logos, and not just logos in general, but a logos dense with isomorphism and self-reference (including performative elements), a carefully ordered and expansive logos – a logos, in short, adequate to the task of clearly presenting the empire of logos, a space where an Athenian reader would quickly be at home. Of all the Athenian logos that survive, which text more forcefully has always already praised Athens than that of Thucydides? Once again, it is the density and consistency of Thucydides's text in all of these registers, along with its relationship to the truth,⁷⁵ that compel our future as well to attain significance against the background of the Athenian past.

What the Athenians Did Not Know

Thucydides points out at the end of the *Archaeology* that there is general ignorance about the past, even the past not nearly so distant as the events he reconstructs in the *Archaeology*. He specifically does not exclude the Athenians from this accusation. Indeed, even here, before the *History* has even properly begun, Athenian's ignorance seems especially unsettling because they seem to have an entirely inaccurate view of the events surrounding the founding of their democracy only about a century before. Indeed, this inaccurate view seems to have been prevalent very soon after the events themselves occurred. Here is my relatively literal-minded

translation of Thucydides's account of the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the supposed slayers of the last tyrant of Athens:

The majority of the *Athenians* believe that Hipparchus, being tyrant, was killed by Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and they do not know that Hippias, being the oldest of Peisistratus's sons, ruled, but that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his brothers, and on this day, Harmodius and Aristogeiton forthwith, having *suspected* something, [namely, that] Hippias had been informed by their fellow conspirators, and for this reason he kept away since he had been informed, but [Harmodius and Aristogeiton] desiring before being taken to have done something, to have taken a chance, they happened upon Hipparchus at the [place] called the Leocreon, where [Hipparchus] was arranging the Panathenaic procession, and [they] killed him.⁷⁶

This is not an especially difficult sentence in Thucydides, but it is certainly challenging. Among the standard English translations, Warner divides this sentence in two and Crawley keeps it as one, but they both use the full arsenal of grammatical symbols to break it up (and the placement of the verb does make this into *one* long sentence) in order to make it readily intelligible to an English speaker. I too have been forced to some extent to do this; moreover, one could claim that the obscurity that remains is a result of my overtranslating the Greek. After all, Greek has a different grammar than English, and hence any very literal translation will sound odd in English.

Yet it can hardly be the case that one can attribute all of the difficulty here to differences in language in general. As already mentioned, Thucydides was considered obscure by the ancients. There is no question that this is a lot of information to be crammed into one sentence and one that, by its own claim, is stating what everybody does *not* know. Moreover, the sentence makes what would seem to be the main point (i.e., that the murdered Hipparchus was not the tyrant) into a digression from the central thrust of the sentence, namely, that Harmodius and Aristogeiton failed through poor information, suspicion, and the desire to do something and quickly. Perhaps the reasons for their failure are in fact what the Athenians would be best off knowing, rather than the mere fact of who killed whom.

This sentence then is a performance of the very point that it is trying to make: it is hard to decipher what really happened, and why, and which aspects of the past will matter for the future. In fact, as we will see, the analysis here goes beyond the difficulty of ascertaining the facts, but points to the particularly Athenian tendency to act quickly, sometimes disastrously, on poor information and suspicion. Thucydides believes that there is

something especially revealing about the relationship of the Athenians to the “tyrant slayers” they believe founded their way of life and, contrary to his almost universal laconic practice, he will return to this story later in the *History*. We will return to it as well.

Thucydides on His Method – Disclosure about Disclosure

Up to this point, we have traced some of the features of Thucydides’s text that allow it to initiate a world. The dense and polemical world of Thucydides’s text is introduced through close and polemical readings of familiar authors, whose works are echoed by Thucydides even as he sets about rewriting them so that they too are consistent with the narrative that is to come.

Thucydides himself is fairly explicit in his goal of world disclosure. Consider what he says in the following famous passage from the end of the Archaeology:

[W]hoever will wish to see a clarity (*to saphes*) of the things that have happened and will happen once again as such or similarly to such, according to the human – for [these] to judge these things helpful would be sufficient.⁷⁷

This is another opportunity to rekindle a sense of wonder. Who is the audience for a work like this? Thucydides himself, accurately, tells us that it is not as pleasurable as other works, and it is certainly far less pleasurable than even its closest precedent, the work of Herodotus. The whole medium is different – that is, reading versus performing – as is the content: few great deeds are being preserved, only great political and military preparations and movements. Thucydides’s audience is to be those who wish to see – not to know, not to foresee, not to gaze, not to act – but to see.⁷⁸ As has already been suggested and will be developed later, this emphasis on seeing connects the text of Thucydides with contemporary tragedy, not only because obviously the truth of these plays is also seen, but also because of the concern with seeing that is characteristic of tragedy.

Vision as a metaphor would seem to be both univocal and atemporal. Put another way, I see a chair, and only a chair, and do so right *now*. Indeed, the *History* is often interpreted just as this simple visual experience would suggest, namely, as producing, or attempting to produce, a single transparent account of events. Yet it is crucial to recognize not only that the use of the visual metaphor here is specifically not prescriptive, but also that Thucydides is referring to an entirely different notion of sight, one that is irreducible in its multivocality and temporality. This phenomenon

is known as “aspect seeing” – namely, seeing something *as* something else. A paradigmatic example of aspect seeing, from Wittgenstein, is “seeing the old face in the new” – for instance, recognizing that a stranger is in fact an old friend. Such seeing is not only temporal, in that it sees the past in the present, but also temporal in that it implies the possibility of a certain training, as well as a certain limit to the possibilities of training. We all understand the phenomenon of being unable to see a connection, of having a blindspot. This seeing is also multivocal insofar as we understand that there are many connections that one might see (e.g., this might in fact be your old friend’s brother) and that there is not necessarily a single correct recognition.⁷⁹

In short, aspect seeing is the phenomenological core of world disclosure precisely because it explains how it is possible, with a certain kind of training, for some people, at certain times, to see connections that they could not see before – even though there has not necessarily been a physical change in any sense, meaning no new physical or psychological or even political fact (not that there could not be). Aspect seeing is a fragile process insofar as the training may not take, but it is very robust in that, once it does, it may not be reversible. One may walk by one’s old friend, but once the old friend is recognized, one cannot “unsee” the old face in the new.

Returning to the passage at the end of the Archaeology, Thucydides explains that his target audience “wishes to see a clarity (*to saphes*) about the things that have happened and will happen once again as such or similarly to such.” The direct object here is “clarity” (*to saphes*); this is the presupposition for seeing anything properly at all. The second requirement is the ability to see *kinds*, that is, to see “as such or similarly to such” (τοιαῦτα καὶ παρὰπλήσια). Pericles uses the same phrase later in Book One to describe the situation of the Spartans that he has presented in his logos.⁸⁰ The recognition of kinds, that is, of seeing something as something else, presupposes logos, that is, an ordering, though not an absolute ordering. For instance, Pericles’s words, though prescient, are not entirely correct/accurate. He *does* respond to the claim of the Corinthians that they (the Peloponnesians) could raid the treasury at Delphi and bribe the Athenian sailors, but Thucydides does not record the Peloponnesians as ever attempting such a maneuver. Moreover, Pericles rightly explains why the Peloponnesians will not be able to act as decisively as the Athenians; nevertheless, by Book Three, the situation the Athenians find themselves in is beyond anything discussed by Pericles. Though there is guidance to be found in Pericles, this guidance is only in kind.

The larger narrative also illustrates kinds, such as “Pericles.” Against the background of such kinds, dialogues can continue forever (e.g., *is* Cleon really the more Periclean?), but we must remember that Thucydides must first gather these kinds and place them in the appropriate tension with one another before a background against which they can stand out. Even before that, Thucydides must clear a space in which these kinds can play. It will suffice for him if the wise can see these kinds and as a result can have the discussions that will last forever (what has indeed happened).⁸¹

Thucydides qualifies his central claim about creating a clarity with the phrase “according to the human.” Too often, with little textual or contextual support, this claim becomes a claim about “human nature.”⁸² Other profound notions of the human were readily available, most notably in tragedy, which also includes a fascination with vision⁸³ and which will be discussed at length shortly. For now, we can note that “seeing as” is an especially human kind of seeing and, as such, one especially appropriate for consideration by the wise readers to whom Thucydides is directing himself.⁸⁴ Decades later, Aristotle too would note that wisdom is commonly associated with wresting away a more comprehensive perspective on events, and that doing so is an end in itself.⁸⁵

And, indeed, the phenomenon of aspect seeing was a matter of concern to the wise. Already in Homer, what one perceives with one’s *nous* is not entirely based on what one visually perceives at a given moment, but it is somehow also situational.⁸⁶ Especially interesting, following Kurt von Fritz, is that the exact nature of *nous* is explicitly considered by the Presocratic philosophers. Empedocles associates *nous* with seeing that an expression is happy rather than sad.⁸⁷ This phenomenon too is a paradigmatic example of aspect seeing because nothing changes in the visual field. What changes is the connections, the ordering, the rubric under which a particular phenomenon is gathered. And, crucially, the particular axis on which the reordering occurs is temporal. Democritus associates *nous* with the capacity to see the workings of atoms and the void that must be beneath all of our sensual perceptions.⁸⁸ Heraclitus portrays *nous* as that which can detect the hidden harmony of opposites, precisely that which is denied to the many, and crucially, this harmony is called the *logos*.⁸⁹

This discussion of aspect seeing in the Presocratics is necessarily brief given the profundity of the primary sources and secondary literature. Yet before moving on, it is worth noting that Bruno Snell traces a similar visual path for the verb *gignoskein*. In Homer it is linked to a seeing that

goes beyond mere appearance, and the connection with seeing continues at least through Demosthenes.⁹⁰ The noun *gnome*, which is derived from this verb and is central in Thucydides,⁹¹ is, according to Snell, the “result of recognition” (*erkennen*) and is almost synonymous with *nous* in the Presocratics and Hippocratics.⁹² What is the result of a recognition? Seeing an object *as* an object – in other words, aspect seeing!⁹³ Furthermore, Hermann Fränkel notes that Xenophanes uses the crucial phrase *to saphes* (a clarity) three times and claims that for Xenophanes such a clarity can only be achieved through rigorous empiricism.⁹⁴ Thus the notion of a clarity, used rarely in Thucydides,⁹⁵ though he gives it a more prominent place in the Archaeology than *aletheia* (commonly translated as “truth”), has a philosophical resonance, but not as a synonym for a correspondence theory of truth.⁹⁶

The rhetorical significance of *to saphes* should also be noted. For Aristotle, the excellence (*arete*) of style (*lexis*) is clarity (*saphe*).⁹⁷ Aristotle even goes so far as to advocate concealing artifice as part of achieving a clear style.⁹⁸ Thucydides's own means of persuasion are appropriately hidden. As mentioned previously, Thucydides's Archaeology can be seen as a mere rhetorical set piece, a buildup, but it is more often read as an entirely appropriate declaration of a new method. Both views are correct; achieving a clarity requires that one's means recede from view, but it is actually part of the conjuring trick to begin with an entirely familiar trumpeting of one's rigor.

A final test. H. D. F Kitto asked, though did not explicitly answer, the following excellent question: Thucydides focuses on financial matters to a tremendous extent in the so-called Archaeology (“almost Marxist,” in Kitto's words),⁹⁹ yet this emphasis falls off rapidly in the historical period, even at moments that would seem crucial to our sensibility – why? I presume that Kitto's implicit answer is that Thucydides was more interested in pathos than money, and so as soon as he could work in pathos, it became the center of his narrative. This strikes me as a plausible but limited reading.¹⁰⁰ It is not pathos that becomes possible with *akribeia* (precision) for contemporary events, but logos. It is, after all, the explicit and implicit speeches, arguments, and relations that dominate the narrative. There could be no logos for the distant past because there could be no sense of *ta aiei deonta* – what was appropriate at *that* moment. Or, perhaps inasmuch as the situation of the distant past is known at all, it is poets and logographers who have already provided the speeches.

How then to relate the distant past? How can it be yoked to the present so as to provide a contrast, a selection of kinds? Thucydides achieves this

through his mobilization of money, which, in its uncanny interchangeability, is already often related to *logos* as language. In this he does not give us a mere metaphor, but he uses the infinite relationality of money to weave a unified picture of the distant past. The role of money is consistent, ubiquitous, dense, and significant. For instance, Athens, not Sparta or any other society, is the culmination of the distant past as presented by Thucydides. In a world dominated by a surplus of capital and navies, there has never been a power such as Athens (note the “such”),¹⁰¹ though, according to Thucydides, there have been recognizable, if surprising, precedents, such as the power of Minos and Agamemnon.¹⁰² On this reading (which we will return to), Thucydides has taken the imperial ideology espoused by Pericles in the Funeral Oration and projected it backward.

Let us remember the difficulty of the task in the opening pages of the *History*. The work, as it itself insists and then performs, is a foundational innovation: it is new, but it can only succeed to the extent that it is shown to be old. Herodotus faces a similar problem and solves it by weaving his story into a series of well-known (anecdote-filled) clashes with the East. Thucydides too starts with Homer, with “what everybody knows,” only to alter the traditional stories violently. One thinks here of the Platonic Socrates. He is a bitter ironist who comes to a heavily foreshadowed and undeserved end; Socrates’s drama is continuous with that of tragic protagonists. But of course he is different, and this difference is magnified until he is not a protagonist at all. Philosophy does not need Socrates; he is sublated, that is, his disappearance is also in a sense his greatest triumph. Thucydides performs a similar bootstrap operation, but insofar as he is *more* fascinated by this world than Homer (and certainly more so than Plato), he will be led further and further beyond the tradition he has drawn upon and more into the details (say, of sea battles).

The Causes of the War

If we return to the famous opening sentence of Herodotus’s work, we find that he, unlike Thucydides, promises to explore the charges and countercharges that brought the two sides into conflict:

This is the display (*apodeixis*) of the inquiries (*historia*) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus; so that neither the happenings of men become faded through time, nor great and wondrous deeds, some displayed (verbal form of *apodeixis*) by the Hellenes, some by the Barbarians, become unsung (*akleos*), and, among other things [to be preserved], on what ground/charge (*aitia*) they warred with one another.

Thucydides makes no such promise in his opening sentence or in his whole opening passage. At the end of the Archaeology, however, and in his own voice, Thucydides does seem to provide his authoritative explanation for the causes of the war. Here is Crawley's translation, with some parenthetical notation concerning the critical choices he made as a translator:

To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of their grounds of complaint (*aitia*) and points of difference, that no one may ever have to ask the immediate cause [gloss of the prepositional phrase "from what"] which plunged the Hellenes into a war of such magnitude. The real cause [translation of ἀλληθεστάτη πρόφασις] I consider to be the one which was formally kept out of sight [literally "least manifest in logos"]. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable [gloss of the form of the verb "to compel"].¹⁰³

This famous passage has been written about ad nauseum. Some of the most important critical discussions are treated in Appendix I. For our purposes here, only a few key points need to be made. First, it would be very odd if in this passage, contra to Crawley's translation, with no obvious preparation or elaboration, Thucydides was proposing an analytic of historical causality. The parallel with Herodotus should at least suggest that the default meaning of the possibly causal terms should be understood in terms of charges, not mechanistic causes. Further, given the polemical structure of the text to this point, including points of tension with itself, it would be surprising, though admittedly not impossible, if *now* Thucydides was just laying out how and why it was that the greatest *kinesis* in human history occurred.

In fact, this sentence contains numerous structural ambiguities that have encouraged fruitful discussion but have prevented it from ever ending. For instance, the grammar of the sentence allows several different subject-object combinations in connection with the verb "to compel." And so, the Athenian growth can be compelling the Spartan fear, or they can both be caused jointly, or the supposed necessity of war can itself be causing either the Athenian growth or the Spartan fear or both, and there are more possibilities.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, how is one to interpret Thucydides's narrative interjection, "I believe," translated by Crawley as "I consider"? It seems to be standard to take this as making the claim somehow stronger, but it is unclear why this rare narrative intervention of Thucydides the Athenian should be seen as asserting priority rather than hesitation, especially given the built-in ambiguity of the sentence and, perhaps more importantly, the ambiguities built into the text waiting to waylay any commentator who boldly asserts that Thucydides believes that

such and such caused the war. Yes, Athens grew rapidly during the Pentecontaetia (the fifty-year period before the end of the Persian Wars and the beginning of “our” Peloponnesian War), but Thucydides does not record specially aggressive Athenian actions in the years immediately preceding the war, nor does he record especial fear on the Spartan side.¹⁰⁵

Amid this confusion, one may wonder whether this seemingly key and carefully crafted sentence says anything at all. The confusion only arises because the sentence is being asked to provide a univocal answer to a question it did not pose. We should start again by retranslating the sentence, allowing ourselves to be struck by the many “visual words”:

I have first set forth the charges and differences *why* they dissolved [the peace], lest someone ever seek from what such a war happened to the Hellenes. For the *most revealing pretext* [ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις], though the one least manifest in logos, the Athenians, I believe, growing great and providing fear to the Lacedaimonians, compelled into warring.¹⁰⁶

Thucydides is addressing an audience of those who wish to see, and he is trying to assist their vision by drawing forth a series of connections that is most likely to be obscured even as it has the most, though not conclusive, explanatory power.

Demonstrating the functioning of this most revealing, but hidden, pretext is paradoxical, but it can be readily done. Consider the following example. Thucydides goes out of his way to date the beginning of the war with the Theban “invasion” of Plataea.¹⁰⁷ There is a question of just what the sudden appearance of armed Thebans in Plataea amounted to. On the one hand, there was no war before the Thebans entered Plataea and, in fact, their limited numbers and general naiveté reflect the fact that they thought they were at peace. Of course, the Plataeans did not see the presence of the Thebans in this way, and they subjected the Thebans to war, total war in fact.

Now what were the Thebans (who were all killed) thinking? They seem to have been victims of an unusual and essentially human temporality, one that we will soon label “tragic.” They moved against a hostile city because they saw that war was inevitable, but they were trusting because they were not at war. They were “right” on both counts. They were not at war, but their actions precipitated actual combat. In fact, their opinion about the war, their *seeing* before that the war was coming (*pro-idein*), actually made the war happen.¹⁰⁸ This is how one would expect the most revealing pretext to operate; it explains Athenian behavior, such as extending a defensive alliance to Corcyra, Spartan behavior (even Archidamus seems

to assume that war is inevitable), and the bizarre Theban decisions that actually commence hostilities.¹⁰⁹ The *prophasis* is a logos whose power stretches backward¹¹⁰ and forward in time; even more extraordinary, it is self-fulfilling even as it is dubious, and it is hidden, requiring patient rereading by the wise.

Conclusion

From the perspective of world disclosure, many difficult aspects of Thucydides's Archaeology become comprehensible: the simultaneous close embrace and rejection of his predecessors and contemporaries, his retrojection of his peculiar analysis of the present into the mythical past, his complicated absorption of the Athenian style and imperial ideology, his concern with vision, and his relative lack of concern with providing a systematic analysis of causality. Thucydides's seemingly familiar treatment of a great war, itself a familiar theme, is both the sugar that draws the reader in and the glass that lulls her, as his terse analysis of the past redescribes the once familiar world outside of the fly-bottle from the first sentence. For all of his subtle artistry, Thucydides makes several programmatic statements that explain what he is doing. Admittedly, these statements are dense and obscure, which is to some extent necessary, since the phenomenon of disclosure is itself by necessity unobtrusive. Nevertheless, these passages have been rendered almost totally opaque by a modern insistence upon asking inappropriate questions. We will have occasion to explore the provenance of the hostility to disclosure in Chapter 4.

The Case of Pericles

Introduction

The argument to this point has centered on the Archaeology as the lip of the fly-bottle. The Archaeology itself exhibits all of the features we have identified with a world, especially familiarity and consistency in its portrayal of events. Though Thucydides describes his project in disclosive language so clear that it has taken hundreds of years of modern philosophy to obscure it, it is necessarily the case that the means of disclosure recede into the background. By the time the narration of the war starts, if we are not in the fly-bottle yet, it will not take long. In section 1.24, with the introduction of events at Epidamnus, we are rapidly called upon to see connections emphasized in the Archaeology – for instance, that between wealth, power, and *stasis* (civil war).

There is, of course, no specific moment in which a world is disclosed, and it would not be fruitful to mimic the text and go through it section by section. To illustrate the worldliness of the world that Thucydides discloses, we will thus discuss an exemplary series of passages, characters, and events centered on the figure of Pericles.

There will presumably be no objection to this insofar as the centrality of Pericles is signaled unambiguously by the text itself, from his three unopposed speeches, to Thucydides's praise of Pericles in his own voice, to the echoes of Pericles found in every speech (and decision) that follows his demise, especially those of his Athenian successors. The centrality of Pericles has meant that his speeches, their echoes, and Thucydides's estimation of his perceived policies have been at the heart of the many attempts to date the various parts of the work and uncover Thucydides's

true positions on Athens, democracy, and strategy. This will not be the approach here. Differences between the various portrayals of Pericles will not be argued to be necessarily the results of different times of composition and certainly not of changes to the position of Thucydides. Again, it is not that it is unlikely that the *History* was written over a long time and likely too that Thucydides's own thinking was not monolithic, just that we are focusing on the work that Thucydides did in fact create and the power that it had and has, whatever his intentions. Two aspects of the work are its great density and consistency, and these make temporal and intentional parsing very tenuous. However, there is a great deal of overlap between what is revealed by asking, as we are *not*, how Thucydides's position changed, as manifested in the various ways in which Pericles is presented, and asking, as we *are*, how the various aspects of Pericles changed within the time and circumstances narrated by Thucydides. It is for this reason that the "old" scholarship can be very useful, and in particular de Romilly's discussion of Pericles in *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, which makes many arguments related to what follows.¹

War – Pericles's First Speech

Thucydides's introduction to Pericles is brief and to the point:

[Pericles the son of Xanthippus came forward], at this time the first of the Athenians, most powerful in using logos and acting [on it?], [he] advised them like this:²

Pericles is not associated with any one group or policy; he is rather the best at doing and saying and is, therefore, first among the Athenians.³ He is also not identified with a particular mood (like Cleon), style (like Nicias), age/class (like Alcibiades), or internal political faction (like Athenagoras at Sicily).⁴ Given his personal and unadulterated preeminence, it is surely plausible to take this war as his war, and Pericles does argue very forcefully for war. Indeed, Pericles begins with an especially important ethos appeal. I am *constant*, just as I have *always* been, Pericles says in the first line of his first speech, and as such, by implication, his *gnome* ("point of view") is more worthy of being followed.⁵ Pericles adds here that he will not be moved by the shifting enthusiasm of the demos, and he will not in fact be moved by misfortune later.⁶ Such an appeal presupposes that constancy, particularly through time and in connection with one's *gnome*, amid misfortune, real or hypothetical, is of value in and of itself. We will soon see the appeal to such values in tragedy, especially Sophoclean

tragedy, and it will be observed then that Ajax, the most intransigent of heroes, dies reminding the Athenian audience of his kinship with them.

The value of constancy here also suggests that that which is least constant, least able to stand by its *gnome*, is a slave. Pericles mobilizes this implication in the next part of his speech. Any concession, Pericles insists, is tantamount to slavery because any concession demonstrates a slavish desire for peace and quiet.⁷ The logic of this position does seem to make war inevitable if, and only if, Pericles’s argument can carry the day (which it will).⁸ It is fallacious, however, to claim that any concession is tantamount to accepting one’s place as a slave. Not only is this an example of the either/or and slippery slope fallacies, there is an opposing value within the culture. One may well claim that the value of “turning the other cheek” is alien to classical Athens and was thus unavailable to Pericles/Thucydides, but friendship, as analyzed by Aristotle, is not alien.⁹ All of which is to make the point that Pericles, in a more Odyssean mode, could well have argued that Megara was not worth a war, that the one who is truly strong can afford to lose a little and that this is the only way to build a community of poleis. Besides, Pericles might have slyly added, the power of Athens is only growing relative to that of Sparta, and so, if a small concession could secure another decade of growth, then all the better for Athens.

This is all assuming, of course, that there were seemingly minor actions, like lifting the Megaran Decree, that could have kept the peace. De Ste. Croix, famously, disagrees with this assessment, and this may be right.¹⁰ On this reading, Pericles’s rhetoric is responding to the fact that there simply is no concession Athens could make, save for giving up its empire, that would have satisfied the Spartans precisely because they were aware that time was against them. Certainly this was Pericles’s analysis (as offered by Thucydides), which is no small testimony to its truth, but, at any rate, the logic of this speech is clear, and that is that no concession would be acceptable even if it might have convinced the Spartans not to end the peace because such an attempt to preserve the peace would be slavish. Pericles is not willing to lose a little or to change his *gnome*, and neither should his polis. The Athenians agree, and thus, for the moment, a happy symmetry is achieved between Athens and its great statesman.

Now, considering Thucydides’s practice before this speech and after, there should be at least one opposing speech at this point making the case for peace, but, famously, there is not. In fact, as noted previously, *no* speech of Pericles is opposed. It is hard to believe, loosely following Cornford,¹¹ that no one spoke up in opposition, that this happy symmetry was

really so smooth. Everything we know about Athenian politics (including its portrayal by Thucydides, certainly by Aristophanes) indicates that there would have been a vocal opposition. Yet there is nothing other than a report about the success of the speech.¹² What is one to make of this? Most clearly, this is a dramatization of how an ostensible democracy works with a “first citizen.” There may be other speeches, but only the speech of one man is truly considered. In this sense, Athens is considerably less democratic than Sparta, and Pericles’s speech, despite its cunning analysis, is more similar to the demagoguery of Sthenelaidas than the statesmanship of Archidamus (the more usual comparison).

Whatever the true status of democracy under Pericles (as described by Thucydides), just as the Spartan Sthenelaidas uses a trick to make his speech the last (i.e., through an immediate vote by acclamation),¹³ Pericles, too, is not above suspicion. There is the tricky precedent of Themistocles, the mysterious fine Pericles must later pay,¹⁴ and, above all, Pericles’s willingness not to call an assembly when it does not suit him.¹⁵ This raises the possibility that opposing voices were deliberately marginalized by the great champion of democracy. At any rate, one feature of first citizenship is clear, and that is the ability to associate one’s own ethos with that of the community. Pericles’s ethos is, of course, very familiar, and it is one that the community has already admired in tragedy. It is also an ethos already problematized in tragedy. But Ajax, dying in a distant land long ago, speaking poetically and honoring an archaic aristocratic code, must *remind* the audience of his kinship with them.¹⁶ The exploration of political constancy represented by Pericles is of an entirely different order.

There are other pieces of typical Periclean rhetoric introduced in this speech that we should note. First, in assessing the great advantages of Athens as a sea power, Pericles wishes the Athenians to imagine (*dianoiein*) themselves as nearly as possible to be islanders¹⁷ and thus to ignore the Spartan depredations of their land. This argument is based on an assumption of the superiority of sea power that is hardly unassailable. True, sea power is assumed to be superior in the Archaeology, and Pericles does argue for his claim because sea power requires continual capital, training, and organization of an order beyond what is called for in land power. Yet all this effort may be something of a waste because humans live on land, even if the land happens to be islands, and this is a point Nicias tries to make in connection with Sicily.¹⁸ This leads to the second peculiarity of Pericles’s argument, which is his emphasis on imagination and on *gnome* more generally.¹⁹ Given such a valorization of the power to imagine, it

is little wonder that Pericles does not worry too much about ancestral temples, tombs, and homes. One can always imagine them as they were or, if necessary, build new ones. Yet, can a community really be nourished by an imagined history? Pericles does not say. Nevertheless, even as he discounts actual history, Pericles does mobilize it; he ends his speech by appealing to the greatness of Athenian ancestors,²⁰ particularly those of the Persian Wars. At Sparta, the Athenians showed some hesitation in using this trope (though not for long!),²¹ but Pericles, speaking to the home crowd, does not even feign such a concern. For Pericles, at least, there is no disentangling of rhetoric from history.

Who We Are – Pericles's Funeral Oration

It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of Pericles's Funeral Oration. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus noted long ago, there is no particular necessity that this speech be presented at all, much less here, right before the account of a plague that lasted for several years.²² Considering all the speeches that are *not* presented (e.g., the first debate about Mytilene) and the massive Athenian losses still to come, it is especially jarring. The speech is itself full of generalities about Athens that are not particularly well suited to such an occasion – for example, why praise the Athenian love of beauty here? None of the other extant *epitaphioi* contain such praise. And so this speech, for all of its conventional qualities,²³ draws attention to itself as remarkable, and this even before working through the speech's justly famous content. Given the extent to which this speech stands out, we will return to it in greater depth in Chapter 4.

Of all that is remarkable in the speech, most famous is Pericles's picture of Athens, with its original institutions, tolerance, lawfulness, including adherence to unwritten laws, openness, and general pleasure in life and in beauty and knowledge – all without weakness.²⁴ This singular city is a school for Greece.²⁵ Yet when Pericles turns to instruct the living and questions the value of his own *logos*,²⁶ he does not say that the glory of Athens should speak for itself. Rather, he gives the following famous instruction:

[Think it worthy] to gaze daily upon the power of Athens and become lovers of it [this pronoun can refer either to power or to Athens].²⁷

Paul Ludwig has recently argued, persuasively, that Pericles here is responding to a pressing political question posed by the polis he has just described.²⁸ Eros is the answer to the question of how a polis of free

individuals can also be perfectly committed to the common good. By this logic, Athens must be ever greater to merit the love that it requires to be great.²⁹ Such politicized eros poses great dangers, dangers Thucydides dramatizes with the great eros that launches the Sicilian Expedition, and particularly the general association of Alcibiades with eros. Bracketing these dangers for now, what is crucial is that Pericles is *arguing* what it means to be an Athenian and then deriving imperatives from that argument, even as he is also intimating that there could be grave problems. Perhaps even more jarring is Pericles's later command that the Athenians judge happiness as freedom and freedom as courage.³⁰ These notions are simply different, and if judging them to be the same is essential to Athens, then there is a problem. Who the Athenians are is thus not a comfortable given, not even for Pericles, who must instruct them in a daily visual and erotic practice, one no doubt facilitated by the great monuments to Athenian power that could hardly be missed, though they are not explicitly mentioned. Pericles in his funeral oration is thus uniquely drawn to describing Athenian institutions and to original analysis oriented toward their precariousness.

This dynamic engagement with Athenian institutions is one explanation for the otherwise contextually inappropriate dark chords that Pericles strikes in connection with the future, notably his speculation about the honor that will accrue to Athens in the future,³¹ a hypothetical assuming an end of the Athenian Empire much like the one Thucydides engaged in in his *Archaeology*. Notably, Pericles insists that this glory will require no poets like Homer,³² but will result from Athens having compelled (an *ananke* word) every sea and land with its daring. The mechanism of this awesome remembrance³³ is provocatively obscure, especially if we are to take Pericles's discounting of his own logos at face value (which, of course, we should not). Little wonder then that there is considerable consensus that it is Thucydides's work that is the ultimate response to the call to remember made by Thucydides's Pericles.

Rhetoric and Adversity – Pericles's Third Speech

Of all of Pericles's speeches, it is his last one that would seem most in need of a response. The whole rhetorical context of the speech is one of adversity. The Athenians have watched their land being ravaged and have been subjected to the Plague. Indeed, Thucydides tells us that the Athenians insist that Pericles pay a fine, even though his advice is heeded. Perhaps this speech stands alone precisely because of its rhetorical brilliance.

Pericles builds upon the tropes he has already successfully deployed and develops new ones. And, of course, he wins the day.

First, remarkably, Pericles begins with an excursion into political theory: all individuals have an enormous stake in the success of the polis.³⁴ One might have thought otherwise, and indeed, we know that at least some contemporaries did; we may surmise as much simply from Pericles's attack on the quietism of his enemies.³⁵ Clearly, this is a potent argument to use here. Pericles requires that the individual Athenians accept their significant personal losses because of his abstract strategic calculus. This is not to say that this is a bad argument, only that it is somewhat new and could potentially have unexpected consequences. At this moment, though, it serves Pericles well; he has grasped the *kairos*. As support for his argument, he can point out that the empire is like a tyranny and, as such, *all* Athenians are in danger if the empire were to collapse.³⁶ No mercy would be shown to those Athenians who minded their own business. This is ultimately an appeal to fear, though Pericles will again in this speech attack being fearful as slavish.

Pericles's attack against the quiet Athenians is jarringly shrill: they are weak, cowardly, slavelike, and unworthy of their freedom, fame, and ancestors. They have also failed to understand the extent of Athenian power or the extent to which Pericles, as firm, incorruptible, and wise, is to be heeded. Pericles's use of ethos arguments here makes good sense. He does not really have any new assessment of the current situation (though he pretends otherwise), nor does he give any new advice. The Athenians must be goaded into trusting him despite setbacks; this requires building up his own ethos while he savages the ethos of his opponents.

There are many continuities between Pericles's speeches. Pericles always urges the Athenians not to be slavelike. He is also consistently pro-war, pro-navy, and for the Athenian way of life. Perhaps most importantly, he never wavers in his pursuit of undying Athenian glory. The last speech is remarkable because of its bold use of ethos and an explicit appeal to fear. There is also the matter of Athenian imperialism. It is generally believed that Pericles, though an imperialist, specifically warned the Athenians against expanding the empire while at war with Sparta. And certainly it is true that Pericles is concerned that the Athenians will adopt inferior policies – like fighting a land battle with the Spartans. But does Pericles ever claim that the Athenians should not add to their empire? That idea is certainly not prominent in his three speeches, except at 1.144.1, to which we will return shortly. In fact, the logic of all of the speeches, especially the third, would seem to require that the Athenians

expand their empire. With control of the sea, the Athenians can go anywhere and seize new material possessions.³⁷ Indeed, the Athenians have secured their eternal glory precisely through the size of their empire, particularly through the vast number of enemies they engage at once.³⁸

After this last speech, when Thucydides comments upon the vastness of the resources that the Athenians had at their disposal, he makes it clear that he believes the Athenians could not only have defeated the Spartans, but the Syracusans too if only they had possessed better leadership. Thucydides, in the Pentecontaetia, also makes the dynamism of Athens appear great even in the context of the disastrous Egyptian Expedition. Still, it is ultimately Thucydides's comment in 2.65.7 that has proven decisive for attributing a defensive policy to Pericles. Before looking at this passage, we must remember what we have established in our reading of Thucydides. The claim in 2.65.7 is not necessarily decisive. It is acceptable that this claim remain in tension with other passages. It is well known, for instance, that Thucydides's explanation for the failure of the Sicilian Expedition in this passage does not appear consistent with the account he later gives in Books Six and Seven, namely, the expedition does not seem to have failed because of insufficient Athenian support.

But does Thucydides in 2.65.7 not echo Pericles in 1.144.1? Yes, almost, and the parallelism between the author and his greatest character itself is an important indication of the work's consistency. Pericles in his first speech states that the Athenians "will emerge superior if [they] desire not to add to the empire at the same time as warring and not to add self-chosen dangers."³⁹ And, according to Thucydides, "Pericles said that [the Athenians] will emerge superior if they, acting with *hesuchia*, took care of their navy, and did not add to their empire in wartime, nor endanger the polis."⁴⁰ As Hornblower notes, both passages contain the crucial qualifier "in wartime."⁴¹ Since Athens was not technically at war when the Sicilian Expedition was launched, it did not technically violate Pericles's dictum. This may seem overly subtle. Thucydides insists that the Peace of Nicias was not really a peace.

Pericles's attempt to dampen Athenian aggressiveness on the eve of the war could also be taken as a rhetorical maneuver of less consequence than the imperative of an empire to expand. After all, one ought to note the "willfulness" Pericles fears in 1.144.1; the Athenians need to *desire* not to add to their empire, and they must not assume self-chosen dangers. What Pericles appears to fear most is not expansion per se, which his arguments about empire would seem to require, but *how* the Athenians would attempt to do it, a fear that will be shown to be well founded. But

what else but erotic expansionism could be expected? How could the Athenians be in love with the power of their polis and avoid desiring to add to it? Pericles was thus warning the Athenians against being the very selves he was encouraging them to be.

Particularly interesting in this regard is Thucydides's use of the word *hesuchia* in his gloss on Pericles's policy. This is a difficult word to translate, and rendering the verb here as "maintaining a defensive policy" is plausible. Nevertheless, the word is associated with the kind of self-satisfied repose typical of a god;⁴² moreover, the Corinthians famously insist that the Athenians were born not to demonstrate *hesuchia* in themselves or to allow it to anyone else.⁴³ It is difficult to know just what the word implies in a geopolitical context, but it would seem that the Corinthians are describing a restlessness that goes beyond conventional imperialism. The Athenians are also individually aggressive; this is what the Corinthians fear at the conference at Sparta, and what Pericles extols in the Funeral Oration and appeals to in his third speech. To the extent that Pericles ultimately espouses a policy of *hesuchia*, he is therefore advocating a strategy fundamentally at odds with the functioning of the Athenian Empire, polis, and *paideia*. As with Oedipus, the enormous energy and ability that gave Oedipus a great name will rebound against him. As Orestes could attest, it is sometimes necessary to attempt to sever oneself from the place whence one came, but the more one succeeds at this, the more one destroys oneself.

Transition – The Dissemination of Pericles

In the dominant figure of Pericles we encounter all of the features characteristic of a world, and, though perhaps a little tiresome, we will quickly run through these features as they relate to our discussion of Pericles. We will not detail all of the elements of Pericles that illustrate these features. The figure of Pericles is dense insofar as we have seen key words and phrases, such as Pericles's mobilization of eros and imagination, packed with significance. Pericles consistently espouses certain policy positions, such as avoiding a land battle, and takes on a particular ethos, namely, constancy. The issues that Pericles addresses are certainly ubiquitous, as it is a commonplace to note the many ways in which Pericles's words respond to those of the Corinthians or Archidamus. The figure of Pericles is familiar, and not only through its consistency and ambition, which would have been familiar from the tragic stage (and which we will return to). His thoughts on naval empire and his strategic thought

have precedents in Themistocles, and even in Agamemnon and Minos as presented in the *Archaeology*. The significance of Pericles is, as usual, hard to overstate. Bound with the figure of Pericles are the questions of the viability of democracy and empire, particularly a democratic empire. The open-endedness of the figure of Pericles will be further discussed in a moment, but certainly, as intimated in our previous discussion, it is an open question whether Pericles's grand strategy is viable for Athens, especially given its reliance on eros.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will consider the "future history" of Pericles's *topoi* and analyses as the *History* unfolds. We have already begun to see that the Periclean *topoi* develop in the course of Pericles's career—as they must, because an able rhetorician observes *ta deonta* (what is appropriate) in a given situation. Pericles's rhetoric as "Pericles's rhetoric," a body of *topoi* the orator can refer to, reappears again and again in the *History*. Yet there are no mere repetitions; each change, however subtle, has consequences. These consequences, read backward (as we must read them), demonstrate the tenuousness of the vision of a unified Pericles in happy symmetry with the Athenian democracy that this extraordinary statesman would seem to have created. The very logoi Pericles deploys to praise Athens most spectacularly, and to stoke its erotic attachment to itself, will be the ones that will turn against this very vision of Athens. We saw that Pericles employs his own ethos as constant in the service of his vision of Athens, but even this ethos will break apart and rebound against Athens. To be more precise, the movement here is not merely negative; Pericles and his logoi will not just turn against themselves, but will have implications far beyond those of a straightforward negation.

The shattering of Pericles happens in multiple registers, including Thucydides's own narrative. As mentioned before, Thucydides himself uses Periclean rhetoric (even logic) in his *Archaeology*. Not only is this before Pericles is introduced, but it is Themistocles, not Pericles, who receives the highest praise from Thucydides. Moreover, the discussion of Themistocles occurs immediately before the introduction of Pericles,⁴⁴ and this makes one wonder whether there is ever a Pericles at all or whether he is just a place holder, namely, a typical imperialist politician bound to develop (*phuein*) in a maritime power. Certainly there is no unified "policy of Pericles" (despite the chapter heading in the Penguin edition). This is made most manifest by the figures of Alcibiades and Hermocrates. We will see that Alcibiades is not too little like Pericles and Pericles's vision of Athens, but too much. Moreover, for all of Hermocrates's Periclean formidability, he is very nearly defeated

and does not triumph because he is the “true” Pericles. Even if it made sense to say that he was, if there can be a Dorian Pericles in Sicily two decades after Pericles has died, then where can’t there be a Pericles? And if he can be *anywhere*, did he ever exist *somewhere* to begin with? Pursuing this, we will soon discuss the confusion about Periclean policy that ensues in the Mytilenian Debate. This is a debate in Athens, only two years after Pericles’s death, and on a matter of imperial policy, but already Pericles has doubled. Yet even while Pericles is alive, his vision of Athens must contend with the Plague.

The figure of Pericles thus does double duty of a paradoxical sort in the context of this book’s argument. On the one hand, how Pericles stands out and coheres is itself worldly, namely, through his consistency, ubiquity, and so on. Yet at the same time, Pericles’s reabsorption into the text is more worldly still. First, this is because insofar as future and past events both predict Pericles and dissipate his originality, the text moves to a whole new level of consistency, ubiquity, and so on. We do not need Pericles to instruct us on the nature of sea power anymore. Second, a feature of a world is that it be open-ended, and the manner of Pericles’s reabsorption maintains unresolvable tensions, such as: Did the Sicilian Expedition really violate Pericles’s strategy? What about Melos? Finally, though final development of this theme must wait until Chapter 4, the challenges faced by Pericles and the Athenians in regard to their identities are not coincidental, but fundamental to having an identity at all. This too is a feature of living in the human world disclosed in the *History*.

Plague

The juxtaposition of the Plague and the Funeral Oration is peculiar and has been noted as such since antiquity. Not only need there have been no Funeral Oration and certainly not one by Pericles, it did not have to be paired with a plague that lasted for several years (to say nothing of the extensive echoes of the Funeral Oration in the account of the Plague). The reversals that occur between the Funeral Oration and the Plague are numerous and have already received significant critical attention.⁴⁵ That the unexpected and horrible change of fortune can well be called tragic and that it has epic predecessors (notably the Plague in *Iliad* 1) has also been extensively discussed.⁴⁶ I will treat just one aspect of the reversal – lawfulness.

Pericles does not offer any signs or subsidiary argumentation as to why fear and shame can be relied upon to be sufficient to ensure that

the Athenians will obey the law.⁴⁷ The Plague undermines both fear and shame, both written and unwritten laws.⁴⁸ If a horrible death awaits all no matter what they do, then what is there to fear or to shun? Pericles does not answer this question. Unlike the speakers in other funeral orations (see the later discussion), he does not appeal to autochthony, nor does he use any other resources his speech makes available, such as an appeal to the power of Athenian education or character. This is not a criticism of Pericles's argumentation as somehow lacking in an absolute sense;⁴⁹ rather, I am drawing attention to the manner in which the text itself puts pressure on Pericles's claim, right down to its syntax. Using Thucydides's characteristic antithetical structure, Pericles just rams together disparate ideas and moves on. This may well be what the situation demands and may even be an accurate description of the phenomenon of lawfulness at Athens, but the Plague is a potent demonstration that the power of logos to gather together disparate ideas into a glorious vision presupposes the power to rip them apart. Thucydides demonstrates that power in the juxtaposition of the Plague with the Funeral Oration. Seemingly settled questions are reopened violently.

Cleon and Diodotus

Pericles is close at hand in the Mytilenian Debate. Cleon is introduced as the most persuasive man to the demos, the people (also the most violent). Insofar as he is given an introduction at all, and he is presented implicitly as foremost among the Athenians at the time,⁵⁰ he would seem to be the Pericles of the moment. Cleon is facing an adverse situation much like that confronted by Pericles in his last speech. Now the Athenians have suffered from the Plague and a major revolt (not to mention the loss of Pericles); moreover, insofar as Cleon must address the Assembly, it is because the mood of the people has shifted against him. They are unsure about massacring a whole city.

Cleon's response to the situation is Periclean on several counts. First, he emphasizes the role of ethos. He is steadfast, though the democracy is not, and his enemies are traitorous.⁵¹ Moreover, Cleon, like Pericles, characterizes the Athenians as "logocentric,"⁵² and, as part of his argument, he also offers an abstract analysis of democracy and empire, concluding that the two are not entirely consistent,⁵³ and thus instructs the Athenians that they ought to start acting like an imperial power at home. At the heart of this analysis is the claim that the Athenian Empire *is* a tyranny and, as with Pericles's similar claim, this is ultimately an appeal

to fear.⁵⁴ Along the way, Cleon also presents an argument based on the nature of law.⁵⁵ Finally, though Cleon challenges the Periclean marriage of democracy and empire, he himself uses *logos* to insist that his policy is both just *and* expedient⁵⁶ – an extraordinary and seemingly unlikely coupling, but hardly any more unlikely than equating freedom, happiness, and courage, as Pericles had done.

Of course, each of these similarities could be attacked. For instance, it could be objected that Cleon is merely steadfast in being bloodthirsty (as we should expect from the way he is introduced), and there is no evidence that his opponents were traitors. Moreover, Cleon, unlike Pericles, attacks the Athenian passion for *logos* and questions the ability of a democracy to rule an empire. Finally, Cleon's appeal to fear, and especially his attempt to turn the issue at hand into one of justice (i.e., law), go beyond Pericles in dangerous ways.

But is Cleon wrong to question the Athenian passion for *logos*? Even Thucydides's Pericles will not call an assembly when it suits him. Clearly, even Pericles believes that there can be too much talk. And there *are* tensions between democracy and empire, even as it is also true that the empire is anchored to the democracy; Cleon is, we might think, courageous to bring it up, though his preferred solution is brutal and perhaps shortsighted. Cleon even echoes Pericles in describing the trusting way of life typical of Athens; how then can this city, open to the world, manage an empire in which violent resentment is naturally stirred up?

Finally, it is not at all clear that Cleon loses this debate or that his preferred policies are ineffective. Not only has a potential source of a strategic compromise *already* been silenced (and quickly), namely, the Spartan Saleuthus (whom the Athenians had captured),⁵⁷ but after this debate a *cleruchy* is set up on Mytilenian land,⁵⁸ underscoring the extent to which democracy can be made compatible with empire, at least from the perspective of the demos. This forcible appropriation of land that had to be tilled by its former owners (in this case the Mytilenians) for the benefit of Athenian citizens would seem to be very popular, though, as noted by Kallet-Marx, it brought no money into the public treasury.⁵⁹ Furthermore, as Macleod notes, Thucydides records no major revolt against Athens until 411 B.C. (namely, that of the Chians).⁶⁰ He also tells us that the final vote on the fate of the Mytilenians was close,⁶¹ even though a majority of the Assembly had presumably already voted to reopen the case.

Still, there is considerable merit to the traditional claim that Diodotus is the true inheritor of the Periclean mantle.⁶² It is Diodotus who glorifies the role of deliberation and the power of *logos*.⁶³ It is Diodotus who

insists that the Athenians not act out of passion, particularly fear and rage, but instead reason coolly about how best to use the Mytilenians, not to judge them, thereby revealing one of the conflation, that between a court and an assembly, at the heart of Cleon's argument.⁶⁴ Given that this debate occurs in a deliberative setting, Diodotus's emphasis on future expedience is totally appropriate,⁶⁵ and it is thus not surprising that he wins. Yet we have already qualified this victory, and without mentioning the most famous qualification: the entire debate is predicated on the fact that Cleon's motion has already been passed, and thus Diodotus's counter-motion, even if passed, can have an effect only if another ship can get to Mytilene before the first motion is executed.

Moreover, Diodotus's victory has some strange features. He responds to Cleon's ethos attack by attacking the whole political climate of Athens; Athens itself, at home, is like a tyranny, and the would-be statesman must be coy (indeed "deceptive") to get his motions passed.⁶⁶ Thus, Diodotus is not only himself engaging in ethos attacks, but is making exactly the sort of slippery verbal maneuver that Cleon excoriates, and with some justification. Further, Athens as an internal tyranny is an inversion of the Periclean vision and, insofar as it is believed by its leaders, is disastrous. One need only note here that Alcibiades would rather take his chances with the Spartans than stand trial at Athens, and Nicias would rather take his chances on fortune delivering up Syracuse than return to Athens empty-handed.

Most striking in Diodotus's speech is that it is in many ways more ruthless than that of Cleon because *all* issues of justice are reducible to expediency.⁶⁷ The fact that mercy is here appropriate is entirely coincidental; it may not be so next time. The details of Diodotus's proposed policy are new and extraordinary: all democratic parties throughout the Greek world are to be viewed as potential allies. To support his preferred policy, Diodotus makes the point that the Athenians were aided by the Mytilenian democrats, but this claim is not really borne out by Thucydides's account of the revolt.⁶⁸ At any rate, this imperial policy based on class warfare will fan the flames of civil war throughout the Greek world, including, eventually, in Athens.

On the traditional reading, all of this is incidental. Of course, Diodotus espoused mercy for the Mytilenians in the name of justice, but Cleon forced him to hide his motivations in the rhetoric of hyper-realpolitik. If this realpolitik had unexpected and unintended consequences, then the blame goes to those like Cleon who lowered the level of political discourse in Athens. But blame is not as interesting here as the dynamic

between logos and time as it shapes the world of the polis. Here there is no chasm between word and deed, but a demonstration of how words and deeds, in their substantial union, obey a logic all of their own.

Pericles is gone. He was a masterful rhetorician who glorified magnanimity and reason and mocked fear. Yet, when the situation demanded it, Pericles launched vicious attacks on his opponents and made appeals to fear. No one can be sure just what it means to make the whole world one's monument. And no one could know what the Periclean thing to do would be in a situation as difficult as that facing Athens at the time of the Mytilenian revolt. Cleon reasoned, with considerable justification both before and after the fact, that the empire could survive only by meting out a sure and terrible punishment. He also recognized that a direct democracy would be loath to adopt such a policy without considerable manipulation, much as Pericles feared the Athenians would not be able to resist fighting a land battle with the Spartans (and manipulated the Athenians so as to prevent realization of this fear). Who is to say that this response is less Periclean than that of Diodotus? The point is that the *topoi* used by Pericles do not stand still, but can be used again and again. Logos does not belong to anyone, not even to the Athenians, not even to Pericles. The figure of Pericles has already split two years after his death.

Brasidas and Hermocrates

Brasidas is a Spartan general of enormous ability – Athenian-style ability.⁶⁹ He has a keen sense of tactics, acts quickly and decisively, is brave, and, most unfortunately for the Athenians, is an able rhetorician. He is introduced as a rapid actor;⁷⁰ one who is not intimidated by defeat⁷¹ and who is keen on decisive (if risky) action.⁷² Not only is his speed notable for a Spartan, so is his grasp of rhetoric – of logos. Brasidas can not only use logos to inspire his troops, he can also win the day with *only* logos, and this earns him the praise of Thucydides: “he was not unable to speak – for a Spartan.”⁷³ It is tempting to skip over Brasidas's grasp of logos as being merely one characteristic of an able general. But we already have good reason not to view facility with logos as merely one ability among others. Logos organizes everything, and the ability to recognize its functioning is the sign of wisdom.

A master of logos knows his audience (i.e., sees the *kairos*). Brasidas literally talks his way through Thessaly and Thrace;⁷⁴ he is willing and able to manipulate the facts in his speeches⁷⁵ and, most spectacularly, is able to turn the inherent weakness of his physical position into rhetorical

strength (i.e., “No, we don’t have a large force here, but that was because we counted on *your* help”).⁷⁶ This is not to say that Brasidas is unwilling to make raw appeals to force,⁷⁷ only that they are part of a larger rhetorical project. Brasidas’s ethos has important consequences on the ground, including, crucially, at Amphipolis.⁷⁸ His successes force the Athenians to negotiate with the Spartans after the Spartan defeat at Pylos.⁷⁹ The Melians still appeal to the memory of Brasidas years later,⁸⁰ consistent with the power of the image of Brasidas that Thucydides describes in first introducing Brasidas’s Thracian campaign.⁸¹ Brasidas succeeds in particular by knowing his enemies; it is he who kills Cleon because he recognizes just the kind of trap to set.⁸² His speed is also the cause of Thucydides’s banishment. Even *our* Thucydides could not outrace Brasidas, particularly the power of his logos.⁸³ The figure of Brasidas demonstrates that the Athenians have no monopoly on the volatile combination of restless dynamism, aggressiveness, and rhetorical skill. Insofar as they encounter their own best selves in Brasidas, they fall short, but he (like Pericles) dies before he can make a decisive contribution.⁸⁴ The war will be won or lost by others.

The Athenian Empire was perpetually hungry for expansion; nevertheless, one might have believed that the Athenians would never send a large expedition as far as Sicily in the midst of a war with Sparta. One Syracusan recognized that the Athenians would come and that their success would depend on coopting local allies.⁸⁵ This statesman was Hermocrates. Like Pericles, Hermocrates gives a series of three speeches, and these go some way toward uniting Sicily against the Athenians. Without question, Hermocrates helps prepare the Syracusans, maintains their morale, and is a constant source of able tactical advice. Thucydides praises him directly⁸⁶ and even credits him with some of the “surmises” and stratagems that lead to the annihilation of the Syracusan Expedition.⁸⁷ In his prescience and mastery of logos, Hermocrates compares only to Pericles.

More specifically, Hermocrates articulates several Athenian (often Periclean) sentiments, even as he is described in Periclean terms. In particular, as Orwin notes, Hermocrates is the only non-Athenian to articulate the “Athenian Thesis”: the strong must rule the weak.⁸⁸ Hermocrates is also willing to be unpopular⁸⁹ and is eventually exiled, though we are not told why.⁹⁰ Most profoundly, it is Hermocrates who offers deep institutional analysis – of fear, of *stasis*, military expeditions, courage versus training, and Great Powers.⁹¹ Hermocrates is also absolutely willing to appeal to fear and violence.⁹²

But perhaps most remarkable is the manner in which Hermocrates considers the great power that he himself wields – that over logos. He

says that he most fears the Athenian *logos*,⁹³ as well he should, because he, more than anyone, recognizes the extent to which Athens rules *logos* above all. Unlike Pericles, Hermocrates is responded to directly, and somewhat capably, by Athenagoras and Euphemus. And Hermocrates would not have triumphed if not for the help of the Spartan Gylippus and the incompetence of Nicias, which, as just mentioned, was exacerbated by his fear of Athens's internal politics. The world of Hermocrates is a world where *logos* has been set free. Just as the Athenians face themselves through their encounter with Brasidas and Hermocrates, so too Brasidas and Hermocrates meet their matches.

The question I am addressing here is not one of political science or military strategy; rather, the question is what the very existence of characters like Brasidas or Hermocrates presupposes. The answer is that it presupposes a world because, across time and space and culture, there is a *logos* that provides the *topoi* and most of all itself, as it binds together disparate elements without resolving them.

Nicias and Alcibiades

By the time we reach the debate between Nicias and Alcibiades, the figure of Pericles has completely receded. According to the traditional reading of the disastrous Sicilian Expedition, the Athenians abandoned the defensive policy espoused by Pericles. The Athenians were thus destroyed as a result of imperial overstretch. And this is exactly what Nicias, the elder statesman on the scene, warns the Athenians against.⁹⁴ Nicias, unquestionably a man of virtue, is thus the true inheritor of the Periclean mantle, and in abandoning him, the Athenians abandon their own best selves. Yet we have already seen that the so-called defensive policy of Pericles does not amount to so simple a formula. Besides, it is suspicious that Nicias should be unable to persuade the Athenians. Perhaps it is Alcibiades who is the true heir to Pericles, and thus the Athenians, in recalling him just after entrusting him with their greatest expedition, failed because they failed to trust themselves. In fact, both readings are sound. The deep unresolvable tension on such a key point within the text is a sure sign that we are deep in a world and not in a deduction.⁹⁵

Alcibiades is from one of the great Athenian families,⁹⁶ in fact a relative and ward of Pericles and an aggressive and tireless imperialist (for him, *hesuchia* is most emphatically not an option for an empire),⁹⁷ and so he would seem to represent the Athenians as Pericles represents them to themselves. Also, as dramatically preserved for us by Plato, there is

the intense association between Alcibiades and eros, the god Pericles wishes to enlist in the service of Athens.⁹⁸ Most remarkable in the *History* is Alcibiades's mastery of the *kairos*. This is most forcefully demonstrated by the fact that his two speeches succeed in spite of the odds: who would have thought a young upstart could launch the greatest expedition ever seen over the objections of the most experienced and successful general of the day, much less later win the trust of the very people he strove ultimately to conquer (namely, the Spartans)? The content of Alcibiades's speeches explains his success; as with Brasidas, every fact is a good fact. For instance, he argues that the Athenians should use Nicias's good luck and his youth,⁹⁹ and that the Spartans should trust him all the more as a traitor to Athens because he is only helping them in order to regain the city he loves and, as such, he is a true patriot, worthy of trust.¹⁰⁰

Alcibiades knows the Persian Tissaphernes will not aid the Spartans because of Persia's own interests (and Alcibiades's previous advice), but that does not prevent him from acting as if Tissaphernes were motivated by personal friendship.¹⁰¹ In fact, Alcibiades systematically uses both the Athenians and Persians to frighten each other into doing what he wishes them to do.¹⁰² One could say that he takes advantage of a temporal confusion – just because he says that something will happen, and it does, does not mean that he *caused* it to happen. To some extent, however, Alcibiades's machinations do create the situations he desires; moreover, his whole ability to see clearly and to articulate this vision into logos is itself a form of power. Alcibiades himself says as much to the Athenians, noting that it was his mastery of logos (and his *orgē* [temper]) that brought the other Peloponnesian powers together to fight Sparta at Mantinea, all at little cost or risk to Athens.¹⁰³ Alcibiades twice receives unqualified praise for his conduct of the war from Thucydides, including special notice of his unique ability to stand up to and control an angry mass of Athenians about to commit a strategic blunder.¹⁰⁴ In his foresight, courage, and mastery of logos, he would seem to be a worthy successor to Pericles and an appropriate leader of Athens.

There is another ironic sense in which Alcibiades is deeply Periclean. Just as the Athens Pericles extols and instructs could hardly be expected to maintain a policy of *hesuchia*, one may ask, why trust a polis willing to launch the Sicilian Expedition not to follow some other eros in undermining it? In this way, both Pericles and Alcibiades, for all of their formidable and very Athenian talents, are undone by the Athenians being too much like themselves.

In contrast, Nicias, Alcibiades's opponent, has a "logical" inability, a most un-Athenian handicap. Right from Alcibiades's first introduction, he outmaneuvers Nicias.¹⁰⁵ Even more strikingly, not only does Nicias consistently distrust the Athenian demos, he completely and consistently misjudges it. Already in connection with the siege of Pylos,¹⁰⁶ Nicias tries the ruse of surrendering his command to Cleon. But the people accept his offer, and Cleon wins the (accidental) glory of victory at Pylos. Nicias tries a similar maneuver again in connection with Sicily; he tells the Athenians that they will need a huge expedition to Syracuse in order to dissuade the Athenians from undertaking the expedition at all,¹⁰⁷ but, of course, the people are only too happy to oblige. Nicias seems aware of his lack of rhetorical talent and tries to remedy the situation by sending the Athenians a *letter* rather than a verbal report via messenger concerning his plight in Sicily.¹⁰⁸ This trust in writing is misplaced, and the letter does not result in Nicias being recalled; rather, another large expedition is sent out. Finally, unlike even the Spartan Gylippus, Nicias is unable to exhort his army amid misfortune.¹⁰⁹

For all his shortcomings, Nicias is not a terrible general; he wins minor successes¹¹⁰ and does almost conquer Syracuse (despite himself). By his own admission,¹¹¹ he fails because of the help of the Spartan Gylippus, though Nicias himself had done nothing to prevent the arrival of Gylippus.¹¹² He is consistently slow, his advice is the most cautious,¹¹³ and his extraordinary delaying dooms his entire force to annihilation.¹¹⁴ Only at the very end, in the midst of headlong retreat, does he move quickly.¹¹⁵ And why does he tarry at Syracuse? Because of an eclipse, fear of the people, and, most remarkably, because of his hope that he might yet win the day through *stasis* in Syracuse.¹¹⁶ But the Diodotan strategy of promoting democracy could not so simply be transferred to Syracuse because it was *already* a democracy (as noted by Thucydides).¹¹⁷ All Nicias accomplishes with his machinations is his own demise. He is executed over Spartan protests because the Syracusans he conspired with fear that he will unmask them.¹¹⁸

There is a great temptation to claim that the Syracusan Expedition failed because it was led by an anti-Pericles even though it was the brain-child of a general more Periclean than Pericles himself. Nicias is cautious, superstitious, unable to grasp the *kairos* (in speech or action), and unable to do the subtle institutional analysis that is a Periclean hallmark. This is in contrast to Alcibiades, who grasps the logic of Periclean imperialism and instantiates it in his outsized personality. Nevertheless, Thucydides makes it clear that Nicias was a man of *arete* – excellence.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Nicias

uses the Periclean tropes of being incorruptible and firm and stands up to the Athenians, even espousing the benefits of deliberation.¹²⁰ His ruses may not work, but are they really different in kind from those used by Pericles in not calling an assembly at all? Nicias's strategic and institutional analysis is not without merit – namely, that the Athenians should deal with their current enemies first,¹²¹ that a Syracusan Empire would be unlikely to join in a crusade to destroy the Athenian Empire,¹²² that the older citizens should act as a check on the eros of the younger,¹²³ that the Athenians continued to have a capital advantage over the Syracusans, and that any withdrawal had best be done in secret.¹²⁴

And Alcibiades is hardly unambiguously Periclean. More than any other figure in the *History*, he is concerned with his own glory (and is so right from his first appearance).¹²⁵ True, he turns even this remarkable departure into a Periclean argument, which is to say that Alcibiades argues that his private glory adds to the public glory of Athens,¹²⁶ but does it? Thucydides himself wonders about Alcibiades's self-absorption and attributes similar concerns to the demos that would eventually turn on him,¹²⁷ and his general excessiveness is readily used by the enemies who get him exiled for the incident of the Herms.¹²⁸ Earlier, Nicias attacked Alcibiades on similar grounds, and later Phrynichus opposes Alcibiades as essentially having no commitment to any form of government in Athens, just to his own power and glory.¹²⁹ Not surprisingly, Alcibiades is also notable in the *History* for his reliance upon appeals to his family history.¹³⁰

Pericles wished to employ the people's eros, but it is not clear to what extent. Does Alcibiades's private success contribute to the commonweal? Athens is uniquely vigorous, but does this imperial imperative toward action mandate ever more extraordinary expansion? If so, are large islands different from small ones? What about other democracies? Must aggressive strategy be paired with aggressive tactics? All is familiar, and the questions are ever sharper and more insistent, as are the answers, but there is no single answer.

Thucydides

In order to demonstrate fully the world-defining power of the figure of Pericles, we must go back. By now we see how the figure of Pericles shatters as we read forward; moreover, we should be clear about the extent to which, upon rereading, Pericles's great speeches shatter on

their own. For example, Pericles begins his final speech with the somber ethos of Nicias but ends it with the rousing imperialism of Alcibiades. But could this be just a peculiarity of the unique case of Pericles? Or is this productive ambiguity sown into the entire world of the *History*?

Our narrator, Thucydides the Athenian, not only echoes Periclean themes before Pericles comes on the stage, but actually uses some of the *topoi* most typical of funeral orations in general (including some actually used by his Pericles). Thucydides's Archaeology contains Athenian claims of autochthony, lack of *stasis*, defense of the weak, originality in institutions, prioritization of capital and of navies, attacks on Homer, and even emphasis on memory creation. These have led authors like Adam Parry to note that Thucydides is himself obeying the Periclean dictum to create an everlasting (and loving) memorial to Athens.¹³¹ That seems a plausible reading of the work of Thucydides the *Athenian*, especially in light of Thucydides's dogged fealty to Pericles's call for the exclusion of women (and the general glorification of the polis).

Furthermore, right to the end of the *History*, Thucydides offers us extraordinary institutional analyses in his own voice. We find such an analysis in his account of the manner in which oligarchies formed out of democracies are most likely to be destroyed.¹³² In oligarchies, individuals are not willing to cede power gracefully, but in a democracy such grace is easier because one can dismiss the electorate as not being one's equals. This is a particular problem in new oligarchies (especially those under pressure) and a problem that is exacerbated by democratic habits. Whatever the merits of this analysis, its originality is extraordinary. Thucydides is not analyzing a form of government, but a form of transition *between* forms of government. Relatedly, as noted earlier, Thucydides notes how the appeal to the "Five Thousand" had more power because the institution this term was supposed to refer to did not exist.¹³³ In other words, the oligarchs who led the coup at Athens (the Four Hundred) claimed again and again that they would share power with the Five Thousand, but never named these Five Thousand. This kept the suspicious populace in suspense since no one knew if they or their neighbors would be included in the government; there could be no angry outsiders if the insiders were never named. This account provides another shrewd piece of political analysis, especially as it relates to fear and the power of logos; but most important to note here is the extent to which Thucydides, like Pericles, is submitting structural issues to everlasting discussion.

Yet reading Thucydides through Pericles creates an odd textual-temporal loop. Even bracketing the extent to which Pericles's voice is a creation of Thucydides, Pericles's most distinctive claims are embedded in the prehistory of the Greeks, as well as their history long after he leaves the scene. The world was functioning as Pericles described it long before there was a Pericles. On the one hand, this only serves to highlight Pericles's intellectual brilliance, but, on the other, it also dulls the originality of the figure of Pericles. Pericles, like Nicias and Hermocrates, is coping with a realm of *logos* that predates him. His choices, his juxtapositions are new, and this is ultimately how he mobilizes the power of *logos* to praise Athens. Yet Pericles's *logoi* are not strictly his, and even his most intense constructions are vulnerable to the actions of time. To deepen this insight, we can turn briefly to the portrayal of another pre-Periclean figure.

Themistocles

The first extraordinary point about Thucydides's account of Themistocles is that it seems to serve no purpose. In the preliminaries to the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides records that both the Athenians and Spartans use old curses for contemporary political ends, and this does tangentially involve the story of Pausanias (who starves to death, almost, in a temple)¹³⁴ but not that of Themistocles. Even the syntax signals this, as the story is connected by a mere *de* ("and").¹³⁵ And yet there is also a sense in which the inclusion of this story is eminently logical. The fall of Pausanias leads to the fall of Themistocles (at least in Athens). It is as if the Spartans, deprived of their great war leader, must now destroy the greatest Athenian, and so they send a delegation to Athens in order to accuse Themistocles of treason. The Athenians need little encouragement; they are immediately persuaded, although they have *already* ostracized Themistocles. Thucydides does not tell us the reason for his ostracism; it just so happens (*tugchanō*) that he is not in Athens and thus escapes. Such an ambiguous relationship to the leader whom Thucydides marks as superior to all others (including Pericles) is certainly worrisome, and the parallel with Pericles and ultimately Alcibiades (and others) has been duly noted by interpreters.

But the thematic necessity goes deeper. Themistocles's story is, in a sense, a tragedy. Though he survives through the use of his extraordinary wit, he, the savior of Athens and Greece, must be buried at home in secret. And Themistocles is not just owed a debt of gratitude by the Athenians;

his native quickness *is* Athenian, and thus the lack of trust is a lack of *self*-trust. The question that Themistocles poses is whether it is also Athenian to end up alienated from yourself (or, better, what you argue that you are). Themistocles loses his home because of his remarkable natural (form of *phusis*) quickness – will the Athenians do the same?

Certainly, this is the danger that will hover over the leaders of the Athenians. Pericles himself is fined, Diodotus and Nicias are clearly afraid, and Alcibiades is exiled. All of these leaders espouse a particular relation to time. The rhetoric of rapid, resolute action works on the Athenians again and again, even when they rapidly choose to condemn their quick-witted leaders. And Thucydides himself falls into this category, though in a complex way. Thucydides tells us that as a general he was not fast enough since he could not compete with Brasidas. As a *composer*, it is not clear how fast Thucydides is. Thucydides's praise of Themistocles in his own voice echoes his own self-description of his project:

And to speak altogether [*sumpan*], he was most effective at being able to act appropriately [*ta deonta*] once the moment showed itself – he achieved this through the explosive power of who he was [*phusis*], but also [more specifically] through the shortness of his planning.¹³⁶

This is indeed a summary of what Thucydides has already told us. There is a power that emerges out of Themistocles; he is able to act quickly and to act upon that which is appropriate (especially as a speaker). But the repetition of two key phrases from the Archaeology,¹³⁷ *sumpan* and *ta deonta*, is provocative. One might not consider *sumpan*, “altogether,” that significant, but here it refers to a kind of writing, and one might further ask just why Thucydides feels compelled “to speak altogether.” The claim here is that this line intimates a deep point about Thucydides's style. Thucydides the Athenian, like Themistocles, manifests his intelligence through *quick* action. One writes quickly by condensing. There is no trick merely to writing dense and obscure prose; the key is to sketch rapidly what is appropriate, and this calls for the power to distinguish (*krinein*) and to see. This is a skill possessed by not just everybody.

Themistocles possesses this skill, as do Pericles and Thucydides, but this skill cannot create stability. Just the opposite: it is the skill that copes with chaos – be it that of the Athenian Assembly or a battle. Just as the logos that creates and sustains Themistocles can turn against him, so too can that of Pericles, even that of Thucydides. I hardly wish to claim in this chapter that Thucydides's admiration of Pericles was insincere; rather,

Thucydides's ability to sketch a clarity with logos mandated that Pericles too be vulnerable to logos. And it is precisely this ruthless creation of a clarity that is the secret to Thucydides's world-disclosing success.

Identity and Disclosure

It is assumed that it has been demonstrated that the figure of Pericles is dense, ubiquitous, consistent, and significant. We will spend a moment more on the open-endedness and familiarity. Clearly, the open-endedness is partially achieved through the unresolvable, though significant and tractable, tensions that Pericles discloses, tensions that are projected back into prehistory. Additionally, familiarity is achieved through repetition of aspects of Pericles even before Pericles, nominally, is even introduced. It has also been intimated how Pericles's ethos resonated with contemporary tragedy.

There is a somewhat less exalted way in which the development of Pericles is both familiar and open-ended, a way worth foreshadowing even though it will be discussed at length shortly. The riddle of identity is not just a challenge for political leaders and communities. The riddle, simply stated, is that only a being that is not essentially anything, Nietzsche's "undetermined animal," namely, humans, could even have an identity.¹³⁸ Cats do not have identities. Humans can sensibly have identities only because they can sensibly lose them. The Athenians lived in an unusually competitive society, suffused with the fraught and malleable paradigm of their ancestors. So, as individuals, the riddle of identity was perhaps unusually pressing, and this, as a descriptive matter, is helpful in understanding, perhaps, the brute fact that Thucydides, the founder of history, was an Athenian. Still, if one believes that the riddle of identity must be a challenge to *all* humans, then one is perhaps on the way to understanding why Thucydides founded a world and did not just disclose one. Insofar as this struggle is universal, the struggle for identity reveals a deeper familiarity and open-endedness because it is our struggle as well.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the view from within the fly-bottle. Since it is impossible to describe every aspect of this view from within, we have followed one very prominent strand in the text. Insofar as considering the figure of Pericles has disclosed him as a figure in a world that is consistent, dense, ubiquitous, open-ended, familiar, and significant, it

has been demonstrated that Thucydides's text is worldcreating.¹³⁹ More examples of the view from within will be discussed as we proceed.

Yet more demonstration that Thucydides's text discloses a world only postpones the question, now grown insistent, as to how this success, from our perspective, is foundational. Granted, in Chapter 1 we discussed some of the means by which we are seduced over the lip of the fly-bottle. Most notably, this was achieved through the deployment of familiar stories, sources, and rhetoric, but always with a twist, and always a twist that further incorporated the new with seemingly familiar considerations, facts, and genre conventions. Further, we saw that Thucydides's language explicitly signals that this is a world-disclosing enterprise.

These factors are, by themselves, inadequate to explain the disclosive power of Thucydides's text. Clearly, just announcing that one is about to compose something new for those wise enough to see is not the same as achieving this end. It is also inadequate simply to string together a bunch of familiar ideas and themes and claim that it is a new world rather than just a reconfiguration of the old, or perhaps just a mess. With the figure of Pericles we have seen that the disclosive project is successful and is anything but a mess, but we have not seen why engaging with Pericles is still an urgent matter for contemporary political scientists. Put another way, there is certainly a sense in which Jane Austen's novels disclose a world, but they do not found a new one. Thucydides's world is new and not obviously appealing; why does he succeed? Having delved a little deeper into what is familiar and open-ended about the unraveling of Pericles's identity only provided a hint.

Our explanation will draw upon another aspect of the text, discussed already in connection with both the Archaeology and Pericles but until now remaining in the background. This aspect is that of a peculiar temporality. As we have just seen with Pericles, his figure is caught in an odd temporal loop. On the one hand, moving forward from the introduction of Pericles, Pericles draws from his own ethos as he adjusts to respond to the particular situations confronting him, particularly the Plague. Cleon and Diodotus too seem explicitly to draw from Periclean tropes and positions in their opposing attempts to grasp the *kairos*. With figures such as Brasidas and Hermocrates deploying such arguments as well, the constancy and unity of Pericles seem to disappear. Reading backward from Pericles's introduction, he seems a lesser Themistocles, who is himself one of a long line of maritime leaders leading back to Minos, as narrated by Thucydides. Of course, reading forward again, Thucydides's whole glorification of naval power in the Archaeology is profoundly Periclean.

It is Pericles, after all, who gives the most explicit and detailed account of naval power in the text, and it is his policy for the use of this power that is endorsed by Thucydides. Hence the more standard reading of the *Archaeology* as part of a larger defense of Periclean policy, which would make the distinctly Periclean analysis of power one of the driving forces of the narrative. There is no correct way to read Pericles. As Thucydides's methodological introduction makes explicit, and as his style demands, the text required rereading, and with each reading new connections appear, and these connections are often very significant.

It was argued earlier that a world must be significant and that significance requires this kind of open-endedness. What we have now added is that this open-endedness must be temporal, and temporal in a complicated way. It is not just that ideas and policies must be tested over and over against the demands of the *kairos* or, put another way, that the past is constantly challenged by the future, though this is certainly true. Rather, the future must always have the ability to affect the past, especially that which had seemed most settled in the past. The future of Pericles himself, and his characteristic arguments, shake what one thought one knew about Pericles in the past.¹⁴⁰ Of course, seeing such changes mandates an active reading practice attuned to the introduction of kinds, and this is clearly the practice that the text calls for and requires.

This analysis of this odd temporality is only an outline. Further analysis of the text in support of this analysis will be forthcoming. Yet there is a question here too as to how adequate it will be simply to provide additional examples without a more robust framework and context in which to analyze them. This is especially true because this emphasis on temporality may seem *prima facie* implausible for Thucydides, whose supposed contribution to thinking about time is the universal and rational winter/summer framework.¹⁴¹ One might further add that, given the analysis of the first self-concealing steps to world disclosure in Chapter 1, it seems crucial to demonstrate how this kind of temporality is only a small step from a discourse that is already very familiar. It seems clear that, if there is such a discourse, it is not that of the rhetoricians or doctors and probably not that of the lyric poets either, as such a discourse would necessarily involve the unfolding of events happening to humans in time. The epic poets, especially Homer, or perhaps Thucydides's great predecessor Herodotus, would seem to be more plausible choices, and it will need to be explained why these are not the directions in which we will go. Our focus in the next chapter will be on the temporality of Attic Tragedy, a choice that is hardly novel.

The example of Hegel is especially provocative as concerns Thucydides and tragedy, though I have not seen it developed elsewhere. As is well known, one of the most important moments in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* centers on Hegel's reading of Sophocles's *Antigone*. This moment, the Ethical Order, is the world of ancient Greece – a world divided and ultimately doomed by an intractable conflict between Family and State, man and woman (as represented by the conflict of Antigone and Creon).¹⁴² The role that Hegel gives to the *Antigone* points to the seriousness with which he takes the play and art generally, and yet his reading has at least one serious peculiarity: it is central to Hegel's reading of the Ethical Order that the conflict between Family and State in any one city-state (polis) must end up involving other city-states.¹⁴³ Given that each moment of the *Phenomenology*, except for the last, is supposed to contain the seeds of its own destruction, it seems bizarre for Hegel to base his whole argument on the seemingly contingent existence and interference of other city-states.

At first, it seems that Hegel is just giving an enormous amount of significance to some obscure lines from the *Antigone*,¹⁴⁴ but there seems to be a more profound ground for Hegel's analysis. Many tragedies end with the dramatized disaster spreading to other communities, and this suggests that there is a central element of tragedy that leads to its being *politically* expansive.¹⁴⁵ Hegel thus appears to move from the *Antigone*, and tragedy in general, to the *History* without comment in this section of the *Phenomenology* when he narrates the inherent connection between the internal divisions depicted in the *Antigone* and the resulting external wars that doom the world of the polis.¹⁴⁶

Hegel's analysis stands out because his movement between tragedy and Thucydides is seemingly inconsistent with his substantial theory of tragedy.¹⁴⁷ In contrast, the seminal modern works on Thucydides and tragedy generally go no deeper into the tragic than to style and stock sentiments,¹⁴⁸ mood,¹⁴⁹ or a very general take, often structural (deriving from Aristotle), on the tragic as involving great suffering and ironic reversal,¹⁵⁰ either as a result of chance or mistakes, particularly Athenian,¹⁵¹ though perhaps fundamental to the human condition¹⁵² or to the familiar pattern of fortune punishing hubris.¹⁵³ There is also Hussey's argument that the tragic elements in Thucydides are meant as Democritean moral training, which also makes Thucydides into a kind of precursor to Aristotle.¹⁵⁴

In the next chapter, the goal will be to argue for a specific aspect of Attic Tragedy, namely, temporality, which Thucydides's text manifests in

a manner explanatory of its power to found a world. Toward this specific argument, Hegel's position is again especially provocative. For Hegel's analysis suggests that there are features of tragedy that function to move its tensions off the tragic stage (usually portraying another polis at an indefinite time long ago) and into the contemporary polis and then into other poleis. This is indeed what one would expect to find if it is in fact the case that Thucydides moves us one small step beyond tragedy and into a new historical world.

Deinon, Logos, and the Tragic Question Concerning the Human

Introduction

It is a commonplace to label Thucydides's *History* "tragic." The goal of this chapter is to give this label substance and importance. For this reason, this chapter will do more than just discuss the famous passages in Thucydides that have a tragic resonance, such as the Melian Dialogue, which actually has a tragic format as well. Our starting point will instead be the phenomenon of tragedy itself since it is important to justify why we are pursuing Thucydides's connection with tragedy beyond his connection with any other contemporary intellectual or cultural phenomenon. We will then explore some tragic elements in a story we have already encountered, that of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. This short reading is offered only as an indicator to the aspect of tragedy in Thucydides that will be focused upon, namely, the notion of the *deinon*. Within Sophocles this word is at the center of the tragic condition, and it plays a similar role in Thucydides.

The development of the *deinon* in tragedy will take up the bulk of this chapter and will require considering its use before tragedy. No doubt it may seem at points that we are traveling too far from Thucydides and too little into many of the issues raised by the tragedies. There is no way around this; this is a book about Thucydides that wishes to rely on more than mere generalities as to what aspects of tragedy inform his work and give it such disclosive power. As this chapter will argue, following the path of the *deinon* is an especially fruitful approach both to tragedy generally and to Thucydides, but this approach can surely not substitute for a full-blown study of the *deinon* in tragedy or of tragedy more generally.

Tragedy

Tragedy was the preeminent art form in Classical Athens, and one that was also uniquely Athenian and thus central to this radically new way of life that had burst upon the Mediterranean world. The overall cultural importance of the Great Dionysia, as well as its extraordinary intensity, place it right at the center of Athenian life.¹ The import of tragedy is only magnified by the existence of other festivals (the Rural Dionysia, the Lenaia) in which tragedies and comedies were performed. The Athenians did not experience the performance of tragedies only once a year, nor did they allow the great plays to be performed only once. One should add here that the form of tragedy contains explicit reference to its audience, indeed is a communal event, which is to say that tragedies were hardly “art for art’s sake,” put on a pedestal for connoisseurs. Though there is some debate as to exact numbers, there is no question that a very significant percentage of the Athenian citizenry would have been in attendance for any given performance, and the performances were given in daylight, when actors could see the audience and the audience could observe itself.

This tragic audience, of course, would also largely overlap with the demos that sat, also by demes, in the Assembly and the law courts, the same demos that through its empire had made the whole world come and stand before it. Tragedy, like both the Assembly and the courts, provided another space for elite competition before the demos. And, like all else in Athens, the tragedies were part of an explicit competition. Diodotus might well have rebuked the demos not only that it was not sitting as a court, but also not as an audience to a tragedy, and perhaps this is one aspect of Cleon’s insistence that his audience not behave as if it were attending a “speech competition.”

The texts of the extant plays reflect this outward orientation to the community. The end of the *Oresteia* is the most striking example, but there are other references to contemporary political concerns (notably Euripides’s war plays), and then there are the conventions of the genre itself. Aristotle tells us that a successful tragedy can feature neither a very good nor a very bad protagonist.² This is to say that an appropriately tragic protagonist cannot be a stock character whose extreme traits are easy to categorize and to judge.³ Tragic protagonists are “like us,” and it is because of their complexity that they resist easy judgments. Yet, as is often noted, and especially in the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the protagonists are more crucially “like our elite,” competing before

their own *demos*, the chorus. This remarkable isomorphism between the genre conventions, structure of performance, and larger political structure signals in yet another way that tragedy was hardly just one discourse among many at Athens.

Christian Meier and many others are thus surely right to identify tragedy as the space where Athens encountered its deepest issues, issues that the city's own unique style of government and imperial power created (or enormously exacerbated).⁴ It is hardly surprising therefore that one finds in tragedy a concern with the issues that are most often associated with contemporary philosophers.⁵ Indeed, not just parallel concerns, but a largely overlapping vocabulary. This is especially true for Euripides. But in reading the literature on tragedy, one often gets the impression that the line of influence worked only one way, that the Sophists influenced the tragedians and Thucydides and not vice versa. The Sophistic ideas that do appear in tragedies are often somehow considered watered down, derivative, and even a sign of corruption.⁶ Yet such a judgment does justice neither to what we know of the importance of tragedy nor to the complexity of the plays themselves. If anything, the treatment of language in the *Oresteia* is more subtle than that in Gorgias's *Helen*. We do have very little else of Gorgias, but this accident of transmission at least partially reflects the relative merit accorded to these texts in antiquity. The Athenians did have a passion for Gorgias, but this passion did not last for generations, it was not state-sponsored, and it did not translate into an almost contemporaneous effort at preservation.

Introducing the *Deinon*

The word *deinon* ("dreadable") is central to tragedy, particularly Sophoclean tragedy. A justification of this claim must wait for the analysis that follows, but some foreshadowing of the main points that follow is in order. First, already in Homer this word is associated with excessiveness and with *logos*. Second, tragedy is a dramatization of the *deinon* in action – namely, of self-exceeding disasters that are intimately bound up with *logos*. Third, tragedy, continuing a trend already in the tradition, associated the *deinon* (as an adjective and abstraction) with humans, as against gods or animals, and particularly with humans insofar as they are creatures with *logos* and, relatedly, in time. This association with the human is not limited to the terrors that humans can cause and suffer. Rather, just as *logos* is implicated in the most appalling human crimes, so too is it a precondition for the greatest human achievements, such as justice, culture, and truth. As

Athena reminds her city, they must find a place for the *deinon*.⁷ Fourth, though *deinon* is not as central a keyword in Thucydides, its use is consistent with that of the tragedians. In fact, Thucydides's use is more than consistent; it is ubiquitous in key passages and dense with significance.

Decisive here is thus not the continuity between Thucydides and the tragedians in the use of one word; rather, *it is the continuity of their depiction of the human made manifest through this word, namely, their shared world*. Here is a preliminary characterization of the tragic mechanism that structures this world: that which is *deinon* is worthy of dread because it threatens to begin a chain of unending disasters; the chain is unending because we humans are ourselves the ultimate source of the dread and thus redouble the disaster through our attempts to avert it. The tragic mechanism works through "necessary contingency." The particulars, for example Polyneices and Eteocles or Corinth and Corcyra, are *not* necessary, but the painful paradoxes inherent in their identities *are* necessary. But what is so inescapably dreadful in who we are? The answer is: logos. We are the creatures who must have logos, and yet we also never have full control over logos. This will have to be explained in greater depth, but for now it should be noticed what this mechanism implies: tragedy cannot be bounded by the tragic stage, by a festival, or even by a polis. The disaster that hounds humans as humans is unending. This is why, following Hegel, so many tragedies have open-ended endings. As a genre, tragedy occurs in a peculiar temporality of its own and is limited in its ability to portray disaster as it moves about in time and space. Where is one to find the tragedy inherent in the human in a contemporary temporality as it moves ever farther out into "our" world? In Thucydides, as was suggested by Hegel.

Two different kinds of "logic" should be distinguished. On the one hand, there is logic as a formalized system of inference. Unless otherwise noted, logic has not been and will not be used in this sense. Yet there is also logic as used in the phrase "tragic logic." It is difficult to explain this logic succinctly (Hegel uses 800 pages!), but this logic is the extraintentional pursuit of a concept's or institution's conditions of possibility.⁸ What does this mean? Hegel tells us that this logic can only be demonstrated in practice,⁹ and thus I will take Hegel's famous example of the French Revolution (importantly, from the *Phenomenology*).¹⁰ Through proclaiming "Absolute Freedom," a claim that undermined the legitimacy of all institutions, the Revolution brought about the paroxysms of violence known as "Absolute Terror."¹¹ This is to say that if the old institutions deserved to be destroyed simply because they were institutions,

then this same logic would serve to destroy each and every institution that the revolutionaries themselves tried to build, and the revolutionaries tried to build institutions not as a matter of contingency, but of necessity. Again, this is a peculiar kind of necessity; it is not just a biological fact that people will be drawn together, but who these revolutionaries were was a product of language and of institutions, and these could not be left behind as such. They needed to build themselves anew, but they had deprived themselves of the tools. No person in particular wanted this to happen, but it would not have mattered if one did.

It is thus tempting to call “Absolute Freedom” an idea and say that this logic is about the power of ideas. However, as Hegel would argue, such ideas are inextricably entwined with institutions, cultures, and language. One can see this in his account of the polis. Through setting up an opposition between Family and State, the polis committed itself to an endless series of internal and external conflicts. Whatever the merits of Hegel’s account, it is certainly well recognized that Family is no mere idea or single institution. And so if there is a tragic logic, then there exists deep preconditions for there being tragedy at all, and it is possible for the tragic mechanism to operate in such a way that tragedy as a specific art form was itself left behind, just as the operation of Absolute Freedom worked to sweep away the revolutionaries.¹²

The notion a “tragic *mechanism*” should also be developed. This is, on the one hand, an apt figure because neither tragedy nor history is given; they are at best “virtual spaces” that need to be opened up. Tragedy clearly did not begin as “historical.” The genre, on the contrary, was based on the repetition of great old stories that were to have taken place in an ambiguous time long ago.¹³ Nevertheless, as will be argued, there was something about how tragedy worked that, in the hands first of Herodotus and then of Thucydides, opened up an historical world.

The role of the story of Croesus in Herodotus is a particularly good illustration of the notion of a mechanism being used here. Croesus is the first wealthy Eastern king the reader encounters in the narrative; he sees himself as extraordinarily blessed.¹⁴ Still, the Greek sage Solon refuses to agree that Croesus is the most blessed of men because he is still alive and thus still vulnerable to dramatic reversal. Encouraged by an ambiguous oracle from Apollo (like Oedipus),¹⁵ Croesus loses his kingdom to Cyrus of Persia. Croesus will survive by crying out that Solon was right just as he is to be burned at the stake, but Croesus is only the first to perform the tragic wisdom of Solon and to lose his good fortune through hubris. Cyrus himself, Cambyses, Darius, Polycrates, and, most famously, Xerxes

all go too far. The story is obviously tragic in structure and sensibility, and its logic organizes the entire rest of the work – that is, the cyclical rise and fall of great individuals who go too far. In this sense, the story of Croesus appears to contain within it the mechanism by which a whole realm of human experience is illuminated.

Yet the notion of a mechanism is potentially highly deceptive. The means by which Herodotus and Thucydides open up history is in many ways precisely not a mechanism, and for Thucydides far less than for Herodotus. We must remember, first and foremost, that *we* find mechanistic metaphors helpful. They are rarely found in the ancient authors (though they display a great fondness for geometry), and this absence is not accidental. Particularly important is the absence of mechanistic causality in either Herodotus or Thucydides. It is often noted that in Herodotus (and throughout the ancient corpus) there is overdetermination, but this presupposes that there is in reality a single line of causality. That we may find – in a machine.¹⁶ But words, deeds, character, gods, chance, and so on are clearly not related in this way in Herodotus, Thucydides, or the tragedians. We may even go further: insofar as humans are *deinon*, the notion of their operating mechanistically is absurd.

Tragic Elements in Thucydides

Before embarking on a detailed discussion of tragedy, we will secure internal *authorization* of this approach from Thucydides's text. To this end, I will briefly consider two crucial episodes in the text, that of Harmodius and Aristogeiton and that of *stasis* (civil war) at Corcyra.

Thucydides corrects the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton twice even though Herodotus does record the story accurately.¹⁷ Even thematically, following Ludwig,¹⁸ the private motives of Harmodius and Aristogeiton achieving a public end was already a well-known part of their story. Thucydides is not known for such prolixity, especially about an event that happened long before he was born. The story appears right at the beginning of Thucydides's work and forms a crucial transition to his notorious statement of method. In fact, it is the first, the longest, and the only example of inadequate knowledge of past events that relates back to the Athenians themselves. Thucydides then repeats and elaborates this story at a key moment in Book Six.

Put briefly, the story is as follows: Harmodius and Aristogeiton were credited by later generations with the killing of the last tyrant of Athens, in 514 B.C. A large statue of the two men was erected in the marketplace

(*agora*), and there were songs about them. But Thucydides denies that these two men killed the last tyrant; they only killed his younger brother, and he insists that they acted recklessly and only out of private erotic motives and not for the sake of the city.¹⁹ In fact, Thucydides insists that the tyrants had ruled Athens rather well. The rash behavior of the tyrannicides actually precipitated the harsh tyranny they were later credited with toppling.

This story is presented as paradigmatic, as is evident not only from its repetition and placement, but also from its vocabulary. When Thucydides retells this story in Book Six, he returns to many of the themes that we found to be central to Thucydides's articulation of his entire project in Book One. Most notably, in the retelling Thucydides denigrates *hearsay* in contrast to the importance of *seeing* a situation as a "clarity."²⁰ As noted earlier, the word clarity appears only six times in the whole work, including, crucially, when Thucydides describes what he is doing and for whom, and three of the remaining instances appear in connection with the retelling of the story.²¹

There is a sense in which the story that contains so much of Athens's future history is a *prophecy*, though one lacking any contact with the divine. No god announces that the story of these two Athenians holds the key to grasping Athens's future history; we have only the text and our resources as careful readers. The story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton played a role in establishing Athenian self-identity,²² particularly interesting is the association of the tyrant slayers with Theseus, himself a complicated model of "Athenian-ness" in Attic Tragedy. Yet aside from Thucydides's text, where else is one to find such struggles with oneself if not in tragedy?

The tragic structure of this story can be further demonstrated. In the more elaborate retelling in Book Six, the false belief the Athenians have about their own past has serious consequences for those who believe it in the present. One thinks here first of all of Oedipus, but he is not the only tragic protagonist to be victimized for not knowing who he is. Moreover, insofar as Thucydides's version of the Harmodius and Aristogeiton story is *revisionist*, and revisionist in just such a way that local heroes are shrunk down to the size of Thucydides's own contemporaries, this story seems very Euripidean (one thinks of Euripides's Jason or Menelaus). Harmodius and Aristogeiton are portrayed as having acted from misdirected eros, achieving the very opposite of what they wanted. Not only are the tyrannicides shrunk down, but the tyrants themselves are built up. Just as in Euripides's war plays (such as the *Trojan Women*), Thucydides is

sympathetically exploring, indeed endorsing, an unpopular perspective that is identified as such within the text.

Also, and perhaps most remarkably for Thucydides, there is the danger that this tragedy will veer off into comedy. It is funny that the Athenians spent a night under arms expecting an imminent attack by the hidden conspiracy against the democracy.²³ Of course, there was no such conspiracy and no such attack. The Athenians, not seeing anything clearly, have *talked* themselves into a frenzy. This story even contains one of Thucydides's most celebrated personalities, Alcibiades, acting against a background of anonymous Athenians trying to understand his significance, thereby intimating the relationship between protagonist and chorus. Alcibiades is, of course, also involved in a great *agon* with another elite protagonist, Nicias. Though through their struggle both will attain a certain kind of glory, neither will end his days free from pain.

Like a tragedy, the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton maintains a tension between all manner of interpretations. In particular, it is often noted that this is a story of misdirected erotic passion, and it is such an eros that has just launched the soon-to-be-disastrous Sicilian Expedition.²⁴ Indeed, the Athenians' misdirected eros will actually create the very threat that they feared, the possibility of a tyranny or oligarchy under Alcibiades. The intense Athenian suspicion engendered by unjustified fears for their democracy will lead them to take precipitous action, which will indeed endanger the democracy. And the danger is realized because, as Macleod notes,²⁵ the Athenian demos is so excited by the fear of tyranny that they are in fact behaving like a tyranny – just as Diodotus and Nicias feared. Believing hearsay from the least reputable citizens, they will recall Alcibiades from Sicily to defend himself on a charge of sacrilege.

Still, there are limits to all readings. Sticking to the one just offered, we must remember that not only does Pericles himself challenge the Athenians to become lovers of the power of their city,²⁶ but on Thucydides's own account the Sicilian Expedition could have succeeded *without* Alcibiades and perhaps even despite Alcibiades's aid to the Spartans. We have a metaphor alright, but the text gives us no means by which to bring it under control. This problem is magnified by the brutal manner in which Thucydides introduces and concludes the longer telling of the episode. The story plays a role in causing the Athenians to be fearful and suspicious over the sacrilegious smashing of the Herms, but we are not told just *which* part of the story had this effect.²⁷ Mark Munn argues that it

is the true story of how the tyrant slayers did not slay the tyrant, as told by Herodotus, that had this effect upon the Athenians.²⁸ This is to say that the Athenians had to confront the precedent that they did not dislodge their last tyrant by their own efforts, hence the panic should a new tyrant arise. If Munn is correct, this would, of course, be a very subtle and complex reference to his great predecessor. Most interestingly, this would mean that the first intrusion of recognizable (and accurate) historical research into a policy discussion had contributed to, not prevented, the exemplar for disastrous decision making. Indeed, it would seem to be another example of the danger of supposedly “seeing before.” The true revelation of the past obscured the fact that the danger of the moment was not the establishment of a new tyranny by one man, but of a tyranny of the many.²⁹

Ultimately, every rereading of the text illuminates new connections, both backward and forward. Claims in Book One are justified by these events in Book Six, such as the Corinthian description of Athenian character as remarkably quick to act, even when in tension with their resources and their better judgment.³⁰ The account of the Corinthians is itself supported by the true story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, which, of course, takes place *before* Athens was even a democracy, much less an empire, even though this was not the story actually appealed to by the democracy as it grew into an empire. That the Athenians had rapidly assembled their own democratic mythology is, of course, also instructive.

This exemplary story is also helpful in further distinguishing Herodotus from Thucydides.³¹ As noted previously, the story of Croesus plays a similarly paradigmatic role in Herodotus’s work, and there can be little doubt that this story portrays a tragic sensibility. Yet it admits of a fairly straightforward interpretation (i.e., Croesus goes too far) and can then be readily applied to other parts of the text (e.g., to Polycrates or Xerxes). The Harmodius and Aristogeiton story is exegetically ubiquitous in a similar way, but it provides no clear isomorphic relations that can be employed to connect one episode to another. The reader must wrestle with the details in order to see a whole. Indeed, I would claim that this story too is a revealing *prophesis*.

The role and nature of the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton point us toward tragedy, and especially to the concrete unfolding of self-referential chains of logoi. We will now analyze a further clue toward understanding Thucydides’s use of logos; this will allow greater precision when we turn to the functioning of logos in tragedy. Thucydides’s analysis of *stasis* at Corcyra is his most famous exploration of the

workings of logos in the polis. At the heart of this analysis is the following claim:³²

[and the factions] competing in every way to prevail over one another dared the most dreadful (*deinon*)³³ deeds and [dared] revenges still more so, not setting forth within the bounds of justice and the interest of the polis, but both sides limiting to what held pleasure at *that moment*. [...]

The word *deinon* holds the key to understanding Thucydides's terse reasoning here. Just what does Thucydides describe as most *deinon* in this passage? Are the deeds here most *deinon* because they tear apart families and communities, or because of the abuse of the law, or because of the vulnerability of the strife-ridden state to outsiders? Though all such disasters can be described as dreadful, Thucydides himself emphasizes the excessive disasters that befall those who take competition too far. The *agon*, the contest, is at the center of the polis and the relationship between poleis, and it is most dreadful when the interactions that are enabled by the polis turn against it.

Yet how can a competitiveness nurtured by the polis lead one to assault the polis? What is the means of such transgression? It is logos, or, as expressed earlier in this passage, *onomata* (usually translated as "names" or "words"), and also, interestingly enough, knowledge of the past, which must also be through logos:³⁴

And then [other] cities became engaged in civil war, and those that did so later, upon learning of what had happened before, carried further the invention of new treacheries, devising ever further the ingenuity of their attacks and the unprecedented vengeance they took. And the common sense [as emerging from common decency] evaluative language [*onomata*] for deeds [*erga*] changed as regards justification.³⁵

Onomata cannot simply be words, names, or nouns. In the passage that follows, there are no words, only phrases that are not obviously parallel in grammatical structure.³⁶ It is one thing to understand what it means for "reckless daring" to be exchanged (*ἀντήλλαξαν*)³⁷ for "courageous loyalty to friends," but how is one to understand the claim that "moderation" was exchanged for "the ornament for lack of manliness." This is no simple exchange, certainly not of names. As Parry notes, even the word for exchange here is being used nonconventionally because it lacks its usual preposition ("in").³⁸

The second sentence broadens the perspective of the first. Corcyra became a precedent, which only increased the savagery in communities already experiencing similar pressures. At the core of this ever-growing

expansion, this self-feeding destruction of community within one polis and within the whole Greek world of poleis, some aspect of logos has changed. Put another way, it is not as if innovations that take advantage of the power of invention, of precedent, and of conventional norms could occur in any other way than through logos, which is surely why these two sentences are conjoined as one thought.

Thucydides' examples further demonstrate the complexity of his argument. There are too many to go through them all, but the first one captures the gist of my argument here: "For reckless daring was generally reckoned courageous loyalty to friends." This example is best understood not as relating to words and their relationship to things, but rather to an altering of a sense of proportion. Daring was always valued, but not beyond measure, and now the loyalty to particular friends has destroyed the measure, and this is the key here. The balance that was at the heart of an *agonistic* society was a self-reinforcing system of measurement (e.g., intense elite competition through public endowment), and it is this harmony that has been destroyed – not in a single blow, but by a self-reinforcing cycle of mismeasurement.

And so it is in a world where logoi have been cut loose that the most *deinon* can be dared in all directions because logoi order the world. The *deinon* happens when logos fights logos, and in *stasis* this confrontation is unending. Going back to our original passage,³⁹ Thucydides describes daring the most *deinon* as leading to revenges *still worse*. One may wonder if it is possible for there be something worse than the most *deinon*, but the phrase communicates the open-ended buildup that accompanies daring the *deinon*. Even the syntax intimates this, as the sentence starts clearly enough (with a *gar* ["for"] clause, which points backward), but it is not obvious where it ends. In Jones's Oxford Classical Text edition, the sentence comprises nine lines and six clauses. The consequences of daring the *deinon* spread in all directions. *Stasis* is not the war of all against all; it is the war of logos against itself.

In turning to tragedy, the analysis will center on the word *deinon*, which Thucydides uses in a manner consistent with the tragedians, as a word especially appropriate for describing humans in their relationship to logos. There is additional justification for choosing to focus upon this word from within the tragic corpus. I am very far from being the first to notice its centrality to tragedy.⁴⁰ At the very least, this ambiguous word is intertwined with what a tragedy dramatizes. Even more strikingly, we will see again and again that what is most *deinon* about logos is time; this makes sense because humans are above all the "creatures of a day."

Humans are not only the creatures who order and are ordered by logos, but also by *chronos*. The dramatization of that which is *deinon* on the tragic stage suggests the manner in which these two characteristically human limitations relate to one another.

Deinon in Pretragic Literature – A Summary

A word as central as *deinon* did not appear ex nihilo in fifth century B.C. tragedy. To the contrary, not only does it have a rich history, but a history that the word *deinon* itself describes. For our present purposes, a brief summary of the word's development will suffice; Appendix II discusses the etymology and the results of these queries about the early history of the *deinon* at greater length.

The etymology of the word, which is usually an adjective, poses a question – what is it appropriate to dread? The superlative poses a more interesting question still – what is it most appropriate to dread? In Homer, the answer to the question of the *deinon* is primarily that we ought to dread the manifestations of the divine, such as Athena's eyes and aegis.⁴¹ We most especially should dread those divine manifestations directed at us for exceeding our place as humans, such as when Apollo cries out to Patroklos that it is not for him to storm Troy, even though he is charging the wall as "something more than a man."⁴² This cry of Apollo's is *deinon*.

Boundaries themselves are odd and particularly associated with humans, those who dwell between animals and gods. Homer describes only Achilles, the least human of the warriors at Troy, as *deinon*,⁴³ though other humans, notably Odysseus killing the suitors, can glare in a *deinon* way,⁴⁴ that is, in a way as fearful as a god. In the *Odyssey*, words that one fears are ill-spoken are described as *deinon*.⁴⁵ Most notably, words are described as *deinon* when they are true, but neither the speakers nor the hearers understand the significance of what has been said.⁴⁶ Words are dreadful because of their mobility, their tendency to transgress, and thus bring forth the *deinon* manifestations of the divine.

And so, from the start, it was always a small step from dreading the overwhelming power of the gods to dreading the strange power within us as not quite gods. Poseidon finds it *deinon* that the Trojans are attacking the Greek ships when previously they had not ventured outside their walls.⁴⁷ In the world of the *Iliad*, of course, such wonders could be directly explained by the machinations of divinities – not so similar wonders in the world of Thucydides.

By the time we get to Hesiod, the connection between essentially human characteristics and misfortune and that which is to be dreaded has become still stronger, if domesticated. For Hesiod, overloading one's wagon so that it breaks its axle is *deinon*.⁴⁸ On the one hand, this is a very far cry from Patroklos striving to change fate by storming Troy and being tossed off the walls by Apollo himself, but it is also very close. Humans are always pushing too far, pushing doing what they must do one step beyond the boundary they cannot see, and are undone. Indeed, the case of the wagon is in a sense more tragic because the little drama in which it is overloaded until useless is not, unlike the spectacle at Troy, obviously the work of any divinity. Appropriately, Hesiod specifically warns us to avoid the *deinon* Saying of mortals, which he does not associate with a particular god, but, rather in its easy transmissibility and cruelty, Saying has divine characteristics.⁴⁹ It is against this rich background of an increasing association of the *deinon* with humans, especially, as that thing which speaks and, concomitantly, transgresses, that the great fifth century B.C. tragedians sing of the *deinon*.

Aeschylus

The first point to be made about Aeschylus is that *deinon* does not have the central place his surviving works that it occupies in Sophocles and Euripides.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the moments when it does appear are very significant. We will need to do a little work in order to appreciate the power of these moments. To this end, we will not survey all of Aeschylus's plays, but will focus on the *Oresteia* and the odd temporal workings of the logoi of the prophet.

Cassandra complains that the toil of true prophecy is *deinon*.⁵¹ This line continues the foregrounding of logos in this play,⁵² but what is it in particular about the experience of Cassandra that makes this the appropriate adjective? The *deinon* here is not simply that Cassandra is speaking the truth but is not believed or even understood (as usual), not even that she knows she is going to her death. The *deinon* also refers here to her struggles in a world in which she can speak in great detail about what will happen, and yet what she says will happen nevertheless. Cassandra's speech as that of a true prophet is strangely nonefficacious. And the words of Cassandra are not the first to be spoken by a seer in this play, though the efficacy of this other seer's words are strikingly different. The chorus refers to the omen at Aulis right at the start of the play, an omen that had been described as *deinon* by Homer.⁵³

The portent at Aulis launches not only the action of the *Iliad*, but also that of the *Oresteia*. The uncanny productivity of this omen is *deinon*, but this insight on its own does not teach us anything about portents in general or about Cassandra's *deinon* prophetic toil. To that end we must take a step back and ask, what exactly is the portent at Aulis? Two eagles have torn apart and devoured a pregnant hare. The interpretations, both of the event and of the seer's true interpretation of it, spiral out of control – right up to the present. As Conacher reminds us, there is an explicit meaning: Artemis is angry about the death of the hare.⁵⁴ Her father has chosen to kill this hare as a sign to his friend Agamemnon, and for that she will require that Agamemnon also destroy an innocent, but one for whom retribution must follow. This interpretation seems, however, rather constricting because the whole point here is that this action by the eagles is symbolic. It would be odd for Artemis to be literally angry about the hare (odd, but Conacher is right to add, hardly untenable).

According to the standard reading of the symbolism, the hare represents Troy, and Artemis will fight for Troy (in the *Iliad*); so, Artemis is ensuring that the fire of destruction that must strike Troy will travel back to Argos. One thinks here of the chain of fire that arrives back at Argos just before Agamemnon. From this interpretation, it is a small step to note that Artemis's particular concern with the young, particularly virgins, makes it appropriate that she would be horrified by the slaughter at Troy. Artemis hunts, but she hunts *animals* and is a benefactor to *humans*. Thus Artemis forces Agamemnon to perform an act that represents the fundamental confusion at the heart of his great expedition; he is treating people as animals.

This suggests another reading, namely, that the hare represents Iphigenia herself. Certainly the savagery of the attack, the inequality of the opponents, the forfeited young life – all these things point to Iphigenia. And, as the murderer of a virgin (the description of whose death echoes Artemis's connection with young women – particularly *proteleia*),⁵⁵ Agamemnon is an appropriate target of Artemis's hatred. The problem with this reading is that it only works when one reads backward.⁵⁶ Calchas's interpretation of Artemis's anger thus plays a role in spurring Agamemnon to perform the deed for which Artemis is angry. Yet such a situation is relatively common. Thetis, a *deinon* goddess, gave a prophecy to Achilles that plays a causal role in its fulfillment, namely, that he will trade long life for eternal glory.⁵⁷ The role of Apollo's self-fulfilling prophecies in the downfall of Oedipus is well known and will be discussed shortly. Apollo performs

a similar service in connection with Croesus. In Thucydides, we have already discerned a similar role not for a prophecy, but for a political analysis, for instance, that of the Thebans as to the inevitability of war. This analysis is self-fulfilling, but is no more at the service of the Thebans than the prophecies of Cassandra are to her.

The aftershocks of Aulis reverberate even into the means by which Clytemnestra convinces Agamemnon to stride upon the tapestries. Most striking about this exchange is the manner in which Agamemnon ends his speech and treads on the carpet. Both before (i.e., at Aulis⁵⁸) and after the war, Agamemnon defers to the Saying of the people, a reasonable position, given that Saying, as noted already by Hesiod, can be *deimon*. He is also constrained by the calculating speech of his wife:

But since I am constrained to defer to you in this,
I will go into the halls of the palace, treading upon purple.⁵⁹

These are Agamemnon's last words. In his reasonable human accession to the words of others, he oversteps the realm of the human and will lose his life, not even dying as a man, but as an animal, caught in a net.

In the *Libation Bearers* there is the recognition that the creature that could so constrain Agamemnon is herself a *deimon* snake,⁶⁰ the question is, just what makes a mortal woman, Clytemnestra, *deimon*? The chorus picks up on and develops the question of what is to be dreaded:

Many things the Earth nourishes,
Deimon things, dreadful (*deimatōn*), painful
and the arms of the sea teem with
opposed monsters [...]⁶¹

The *deimon* has been raised in this chorus to explicit questionability. Despite all that there is to dread on, below, near, and above the earth, the chorus asks who can speak/gather (*legoi*) the "excessive daring of the spirit of men."⁶² When the chorus mentions the "excessive daring of the spirit of men" and the "reckless daring minds of women" as "associates (*sun-nomos* in the dooms (*atē*) of mortals," one might expect that it will list the horrors perpetrated by *both* men and women. Yet the chorus will go on instead to expound upon women alone, those who possess "all-daring eros," and this is the answer to the question of how Clytemnestra can be *deimon*. But what happened to the *opposed* monsters, to the carefully constructed parallel descriptions of men and women?⁶³ Apparently, though this chorus is prepared to accept that there is something *deimon* about humans, particularly their daring, it is not yet prepared, despite its own

inner logic, to place the *deinon* ineluctably within the human in general. It is in women, who are more susceptible to the transgressive power of eros, that the *deinon* is placed.

Indeed, the “Lemnian thing” is the benchmark against which all other *deinon* things are likened.⁶⁴ Strikingly, this Lemnian thing is not described at all. This is also an important performance of a key aspect of the *deinon*, namely, that it exceeds what can be said. As the measure of the *deinon*, it is all the more appropriate that words fail – the measure cannot be measured. But what happened on Lemnos? The women of Lemnos, jealous of their husbands’ slave women, killed their husbands, thereby leaving the island literally “unmanned.”

In the *Eumenides*, the priestess of Apollo describes the Furies as *deinon* to speak of and to see; she then has a hard time describing them.⁶⁵ The Furies agree that they are *deinon* but argue that there must be a space for the *deinon* (the neuter, *to deinon*) both in the mortal and in the polis.⁶⁶ Athena assents to this and insists that she does not wish to cast the *deinon* out of the polis entirely.⁶⁷ There is a place for the Furies, for that which is worthy of dread, but the dreadful is to be directed *outward*.⁶⁸ All of this underscores that, in the *Eumenides*, the *deinon* remains; moreover, the question of the placement of the *deinon* has now, for the first time, become an issue for the polis. It is Athena who advises the polis on the *deinon*. And it is Athena who warns the Furies, soon to be integrated as metics (resident outsiders), that she has the physical power to make them comply but that she prefers persuasion.⁶⁹

Why is logos *deinos*? My answer is, because of *chronos* – time. The logoi of the many are to be feared because there is no telling where they will end up and when. Seers are also especially to be dreaded because their words will come true, and it does not matter if one does not understand (e.g., the chorus and Cassandra) and thus fails to act or whether one acts resolutely (like Agamemnon at Aulis, at least according to Aeschylus – we will see that Euripides tells a different story). Cassandra is an extreme instantiation of the extent to which logos does not belong to humans, even as logos defines the human. Cassandra is a master of logos (indeed of truth!), but she has no control over the comprehension of her logos now, much less of the consequences to come. The axis upon which humans exercise their noncontrolling control over logos is temporal. The end of the *Eumenides* is particularly illustrative of this because here it is not a matter of prophecy. The play ends with the establishing, in a remote past, of the very political order the play assumes.⁷⁰ In fact, this is the very political order that sponsored the play! This is almost the world of

Thucydides. Tragedy need not have prophets, or the great old stories, or the gods, or even a stage. All that is required are humans using logos, which is actually redundant. Humans must use logos, and thus humans are all that history requires.

We have seen how Agamemnon finds himself ensnared in a net of logos, a net that begins with the *deinon* portent (if not earlier!); to recognize that one is caught in such a net is to suffer in a *deinon* manner. The question of logos, raised from the start of the *Agamemnon*, becomes enmeshed in and ultimately identical with the question of *deinon* by the end of the *Eumenides*. Clytemnestra murders through logos, but her avengers are foiled by it. Logos meets logos; and like that which is *deinon*, logos cannot be escaped. The challenge is to know where to place it, to measure correctly. The *deinon*, according to Athena, is to be directed outward. The chorus in the *Libation Bearers* tries to limit the *deinon* to women. But can this limitation be sustained? This cannot be done by the creatures of a day. We are obsessed with measuring precisely because it is so hard, and it is hard because, as Protagoras knew, we *ourselves* are the measure. We are not good measuring sticks because we are perpetually self-different in time.

Sophocles

It is in the plays of Sophocles that *deinon* becomes not just a question, but a leitmotiv, that is, a question that must be answered. We will, therefore, spend a great deal of time following this theme through four of Sophocles's plays: *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Ajax*. Let us begin with the single most famous use of *deinon*, at the start of the Ode to Man in *Antigone*. This famous chorus is itself a further answer to the question first raised explicitly by the chorus in the *Libation Bearers*:⁷¹

Many are the *deinon* things, but nothing
stirs more *deinon* than man.⁷²

Now there is no more evasion. There is nothing more *deinon* than man, but what might *deinon* mean here? In the play itself we have already come into contact with the *deinon*; for instance, Antigone makes the following request of Ismene:

But let me and my ill-counsels suffer
this *deinon* thing.⁷³

And the guard, in the exchange with Creon immediately before the Ode, declares:

It is *deinon* to *believe* and to believe that which is false.⁷⁴

Two points are striking about these two earlier uses of *deinon*. First, in both, that which is *deinon* is related to thinking and considering. This is not quite the same as relating the *deinon* to logos, but it is a step in that direction, as the *deinon* is used in the context of actions that are typical of humans and dependent upon logos. Also before our chorus, the guard claims that it is the *deinon* that is preventing him from reporting clearly what has transpired, only now there are no Furies or even a massacre, just the mysterious burial of a body in defiance of Creon's decree.⁷⁵

These passages also demonstrate the ubiquity of the *deinon*. In the Ode to Man, it is man who is most *deinon*; but who is this man? Antigone, a child and a woman, claims that it is *she* who is entering the *deinon*. The guard claims that it is Creon whose behavior is *deinon*, but, following loosely upon Nussbaum, we might also say that the guard's bizarre and self-serving deliberations are themselves rather *deinon*.⁷⁶ All of this confusion (and more, for Oedipus and his sons could all be *deinon*) supports the standard reading of this Ode as a general musing upon the human as *deinon*. After all, the Ode is not about a mythical sea-crossing human, like Odysseus, but about humans as the creatures who cross seas.

How can the human be the most *deinon*? The poem states that humans are more *deinon* than all things. Thus, the standard translations of *deinon* as "powerful," "monstrous," "wonderful," or "formidable" seem inadequate. After all, the chorus will go on to mention the sea, the earth, wild beasts. These are all more powerful than humans and all far more likely to be described as *deinon* in the canon, that is, in Homer and Hesiod. Sophocles has, in a sense, completed the inversion of the answer to the question of what is most properly to be dreaded; it is now primarily the human. This has ultimately been a small step – a small step beyond Aeschylus, where women in particular and their eros are *deinon*; a small step beyond Hesiod, where quite pedestrian human activities can be *deinon*; a small step beyond Homer, where a word spoken by a human in ignorance could be *deinon* and where human transgressing, even through excellence, elicits a *deinon* response from the gods.⁷⁷

Nussbaum translates *deinon* as "strange," "not being at home," and "not being in harmony."⁷⁸ Oudemans and Lardinois claim that "*deinon* should be translated in such a way that the ambiguity of power, instituting as well as undermining civilization, is made clear."⁷⁹ They further

claim that the *deinon* points to humanity's inability ever to live in harmony with its awesome power. And so it is not just Heidegger who wishes to emphasize the unhomely aspects of the *deinon*. Heidegger translates *deinon* as "unhomely" (*unheimlich*, often rendered as "uncanny"), which he associates with being "not-at-home" (*unheimisch*).⁸⁰ For Heidegger, the human is not just strange, but is that which opens up a world through being constantly underway in a world that resists (consider here Thucydides's painful opening polemics). Yet humans are not merely underway, nor are they adventurers; the most homeless creature can only be so if it is always striving to return home.⁸¹

The feature of the *deinon* that Heidegger wishes above all to emphasize is that it is a "counterturning."⁸² Humans are perpetually in the midst of a paradoxical motion because they are capable of sailing off in all directions, but are yet without a way to where they wish to go: home. The way for humans is the polis; it is the site for their being and the place where their relations are revealed. But the human is simultaneously the being *within* the polis and the being that has the power to open up a polis to begin with (and is thus *outside* the polis). From this perspective, the tortured relationship that the Athenians have to themselves as a polis, as demonstrated by the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, is no more contingent than Oedipus's inability to know who he is.⁸³

Though Heidegger himself does not note this, it is significant that already in this play (and in many other places),⁸⁴ the polis is compared to a ship. Humans are the most *deinon* thing, and humans venture through their world in a polis. Humans, like sailors, are always venturing toward home while already home, and the more they are home, the more they are homeless.⁸⁵ Heidegger's translation of the opening of the Ode to Man captures this:⁸⁶

Manifold is the unhomely, yet nothing more unhomely looms or stirs (*pelein*) beyond the human being.

In translating *pelein*, Heidegger is attempting to retain the word's sense of movement. Humans do not exist in a stationary manner; they are constantly moving.⁸⁷ This approach is reinforced by the movement of the Ode starting in the next line, as the most *deinon* thing crosses the sea and wearies the earth. There are also other relevant uses of *pelein* and *deinon* in Sophocles. For instance, here is Oedipus:

This then is how I will stir as an ally
to the god and the dead man.

Translating *pelein* simply as “I shall be” weakens the irony of this line; Oedipus will not just *be* an ally to Apollo and Laius, but will stir himself, and this is how he will step into the *deinon*. We have seen that Antigone takes this step willingly; so does Electra,⁸⁸ and Medea, who orders herself to move into the *deinon*.⁸⁹

These lines, and others, demonstrate the extent to which *deinon* is the space in which tragedy happens; is it also the time? In the *Antigone*, humans stir through logos. This play is full not just of arguments, but of arguments that reflect upon what it means to argue rightly, to think as a human should.⁹⁰ Yet the arguments in this play are not just noteworthy for their existence, but also for their excessiveness. Humans do not just argue, but transgress through the tragic logic of their arguments. The arguments that lead protagonists to *atē* (“doom”) are inappropriate right *now* because the speakers have missed the measure, the *kairos*. For instance, it is generally agreed that both Creon and Antigone exceed the very laws they are ostensibly serving, though the laws of the city and of the dead are indeed to be honored, and it is this going beyond that binds both to their respective *atē*.⁹¹ Yet even Haemon, who is supposedly arguing that one must be flexible in order to avoid such excess, speaks words that go too far; the *kairos* is elusive. Indeed, Haemon gives a rigid speech endorsing flexibility.⁹² Logos is the medium of the most *deinon* thing, the thing that is always crossing, always leaving home, even (and especially) when it believes itself to be at home, within measure, thinking rightly. At the beginning of this chapter we saw Thucydides elucidate the *deinon* possibility that the actions most central to the polis threaten to destroy it – just as in Creon’s Thebes.

Once Antigone is led away to be confined in a cave (such confining will, of course, not prevent the *deinon* from further compounding), the chorus sings:

But *moira* [fate], some power, is *deinon*.⁹³

Without this “some,” this intimation of something indefinite, one would say that these words must refer to the power of Zeus just mentioned by the chorus.⁹⁴ Even though Danae was from a great house and carried Zeus’s child, Zeus abandoned her to a fate much like that of Antigone. Certainly this reading is valid, but why the indefinite pronoun? The lines following suggest an answer:

Neither wealth, nor Ares,
nor a wall, nor black ships
which crash through the sea can escape it.

This is a catalog of human powers that ends with an image strongly reminiscent of the beginning of the Ode to Man. In the Ode the possibility of fleeing was also prominent: humans can flee, but not escape death, the ultimate human limitation, a temporal limitation.⁹⁵ The indefinite power over that which is apportioned is *deinon*. Why? First, as the placing of the line about fate demonstrates, the power of apportionment is poised between humans and gods. Second, inasmuch as the power of apportionment is wielded by humans, this power is not entirely under their control. The power of wealth, of war, of walls, and of ships consists in setting up boundaries, but the power that can set a boundary can also cross this boundary. Indeed, if a boundary is to be maintained, it must be crossed. The *deinon* power to apportion is the power that remains stretched between that which is within measure and that which is without – it is logos.

Let us end our discussion of *Antigone* with the final chorus:

Great logoi
pay back
great blows to those who overmagnify,
and teach *phronesis* (to be minded as a human) as they grow old.⁹⁶

Note the proportion between the words and the blows that are *paid back* to those who do not recognize the proper measure (as Agamemnon is struck in the *Electra*, as Lycurgus is struck in line 961 of this play, with madness that is *deinon*). Antigone, Haemon, and Creon are all destroyed in this play. All three have the power to discern that which is *dike*, to apportion the world, and they muster impressive arguments (logoi) in support of their discernment. But all three overstep: their logos not only reveals this transgressing but is the means of transgressing. Logos is *deinos*. Logos relates to the world as violently as trapping or sailing. It is because humans are those creatures with logos that they both can have laws and transgress them, even and especially when they believe they are best at preserving them. Already at the very beginning of the Ode to Man, logos is at play: can there be a many or a comparison without logos? Yet by the next verse this discerning and comparing creature is crossing the boundary between earth and sea.

Padel notes that it is the particular fate of tragic protagonists to go mad, to go literally *out* of their minds, but she does not focus on explaining the means of such radical dislocations.⁹⁷ I would suggest that it is logos, a point further reinforced by the fact that humans go mad and not animals or gods. And the humans who go mad tend to be those most

concerned with the boundaries of the human, such as Orestes, Oedipus, Antigone, Creon, Ajax, and Pentheus. Ironically, these very boundaries are preserved through their transgressions; there must be two sides to a wall.

In our treatment of *Antigone* we have seen the degree to which Sophocles raises the question of *deinon* more forcefully than Homer or Aeschylus. *Deinon* is what separates humans from all other things; it is inherent in what humans are, what they *see*,⁹⁸ what they think, what they say, and how they stir themselves. In fact, the more a human pursues that which she is, the more liable she is to end up precisely where she both did not wish to go and yet always already was. In order to further develop this point, let us look to Electra and to Oedipus – to a woman who is aware of herself as constrained within the *deinon* and to an exceptionally wise man who is not.

Here is Electra:

Amid *deinon* things to *deinon* things I was compelled,
I know well, my rage does not escape me.
But amid *deinon* things I will not hold back
these dooms,
so long as life holds me.⁹⁹

This passage contains an almost impossibly dense combination of ideas – *deinon*, *ananke* (“compulsion”), *oida* (“to know”), *lanthanein* (“to escape, overlook”), *orgē* (“temper”),¹⁰⁰ and even *atē* (“doom”). That which is *deinon* can simultaneously compel and be a space into which one is compelled. To be in the *deinon* is related to but not identical with *atē*, but perhaps the *deinon* makes *atē* more difficult to resist (or even irresistible). Electra knows this; she has not overlooked her *orgē*, but is this then what it means to know?¹⁰¹ The *deinon* compels more *deinon*, and it is amid the *deinon* that the endless disaster (i.e., endless in time) that is *atē* is possible. Since Electra knows this well, no one thinking rightly will offer her a consoling word (this is the chorus that has claimed that time brings relief!),¹⁰² and this is presumably because words themselves are *deinon*.¹⁰³ Going back to our passage, we even see that this dangerous compounding of the *deinon* appears graphically.

In fact, the word *deinon* often appears in clusters. For instance, we hear the following about the acts of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus:

In a *deinon* manner they brought into being a *deinon* shape.¹⁰⁴

Taken with Electra's earlier comments, the *deinon* is not just doubling but tripling, because *deinon* compels *deinon* in a *deinon* way. The chorus is clearly concerned about such proliferation:

You, do not give birth to *atē* (doom) by means of *atē*.¹⁰⁵

Here too there is a verb of production, of "bringing into being." The chorus does not wish Electra to generate further *atē*. It is bad enough that she has not been able to produce as a woman should, but to produce additional *atē* is *deinon*. In fact, *any* birthing is *deinon*, at least according to Clytemnestra.¹⁰⁶ In such a world Electra does not believe that she is capable of setting a limit upon *atē*,¹⁰⁷ a complex notion that is somehow intimately related to being amid the *deinon*, and so she asks:

And what measure of evil has emerged into being?¹⁰⁸

Here too we face a verb of producing – *phuein* – and now Electra explicitly insists that what it means to be in the *deinon* is that there is no *metron*, no measure.¹⁰⁹ This makes sense if the *deinon* must be done in a *deinon* manner and if this compels further events that are *deinon*; then measuring the *deinon* is not going to be possible, since it is always expanding, including through the method of measurement. Once one is in *logos* and using signs whose meaning preceded one's own existence, one is in a world where one's own *logos* can act in a manner that exceeds one's ability to calculate, just like one's child can, as Clytemnestra knows well. And when *dike* fights *dike*, when the measure has been bent on itself and ultimately snapped, where is one? Obviously, one is in the space of tragedy, but, as I argued at the opening of this chapter, one is also in the space of *stasis*, as narrated by Thucydides.

More connections are made between the *deinon* and *logos* within the *Electra*. For instance, there are many references to the *deinon* in the context of speaking or swearing. Clytemnestra wonders if she should say that Orestes's death is *deinon*,¹¹⁰ but she knows that Orestes had sworn to do the *deinon*, namely, to murder his mother, to destroy his own origin.¹¹¹ Thus Clytemnestra's *deinon* act, her bringing forth the *deinon* into being, compels Orestes to swear to do the *deinon*, and now Clytemnestra is herself uncertain whether Orestes's failure to fulfill his vow to do the *deinon* is *deinon*. This uncertainty is echoed by Clytemnestra's daughters. Like the Guard in the *Antigone*,¹¹² Electra claims that

[. . .] it is *deinon* to use *logos* well and be in error.¹¹³

Apparently Electra, who says that she will dare the *deinon*, knows what is *deinon*. According to Electra, it is *deinon* to grasp the *kairos* only locally, to be correct at this moment but wrong soon after. However, Chrysothemis, Electra's sister, claims that Electra has *herself* missed the mark:

You have spoken correctly on that evil which afflicts you.¹¹⁴

At least one of these sisters has erred and entered into the *deinon*, and probably both have. For, after all, it does not seem that the *kairos* can ever be anything but a response to the situation facing one right now, and this local achievement need not have the results one would expect (or wish for). On the contrary, the more one has opened oneself to all that is specific about a situation, the more vulnerable one then is to the next situation. Appropriately, this argument between sisters continues and centers upon what it means to "think rightly." Yet the very possibility of sisters arguing about what is *dike* when one's mother has killed one's father is itself *deinon*.¹¹⁵ Certainly Electra believes that she has *already* been compelled into the *deinon*; hence this argument is a demonstration of what it is like to be amid the *deinon*. The fact that this debate is taking place in a home that is not a home only strengthens the sense of "not-at-homeness" that *deinon* conveys.

And what about the connection between logos and *chronos*? Chrysothemis tells her sister that she will keep her words inside (her *nous*) and do so for all time.¹¹⁶ Orestes is concerned that Electra's logos will interfere with the *kairos*, the *kairos* for acting right *now* (i.e., for murder through verbal trickery).¹¹⁷ Logos is a problematic medium because of time – just when is one to speak and what is one to say? Here is another remarkable claim made by Electra:

All, for me,
All which is present would fittingly give word
to these things, and with *dike* – [that is to say, all] time.¹¹⁸

These lines are more and less mysterious than they seem. On the one hand, Electra is simply telling Orestes that when the crucial moment (of matricide) comes, *then* one must tell the story of Agamemnon's death (which she does)¹¹⁹ and that one does so rightly. Still, it is incredible that time itself, all of it, even potentially, might speak and speak with *dike* in favor of this murder. This could be dismissed as Electra's ravings, but consider: all time may well speak for the murders and with *dike* because tragic time itself, all of it, only exists as the articulation of murders and retribution (i.e., through the *deinon* thrashings of humans with logos).

This claim will be further explicated, but this passage (and others)¹²⁰ hints at a specifically tragic notion of temporality, a notion of time as the medium in which the *logos* maintains tension between opposites. This is beyond what Electra could intend here, but this is hardly an objection, especially in Sophocles. The irony is fairly typical; Electra, in her madness, is imagining a personified time on her side, but instead gives voice to why time, as ruthlessly counter-turning, must eventually not be on her side.

It deserves attention that in this play it is not just sisters who debate *dike*; mother and daughter do so as well. *Logos* is right at the center of the *agon* between Electra and Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra lays down a gauntlet of questions that she explicitly claims to be those of the now voiceless Iphigenia.¹²¹ Yet Electra will also claim to speak for Iphigenia but to speak rightly.¹²² The central challenge of Electra's argument is that Clytemnestra should ask Artemis why she demanded the sacrifice of Iphigenia.¹²³ But Electra immediately notes that such a question would not be *themis* ("proper"),¹²⁴ and so she will speak not only for her dead father and sister, but also for the goddess. According to Electra, Artemis's anger has its origin in some boastful word that Agamemnon happened to utter at the conclusion of a hunt.¹²⁵ An ill-spoken word, a word without measure, a word that will compel *deinon* upon *deinon*.¹²⁶ As in the *Antigone*, the *agones* (through the medium of *logos*) that are at the center of mortal life (e.g., about *dike*) have spiraled so far out of control that they threaten to destroy the very possibility of human life. We saw Thucydides label a similar situation in Corcyra *deinon*, but Corcyra is a contemporary polis and not the House of Atreus.

Electra understands that she is caught in the midst of a chain of excessive words and deeds:

But your [i.e., Clytemnestra's] ill-mindedness and
deeds compel me to do these things by force.
Since shameful matters are taught by shameful matters.¹²⁷

And so does Clytemnestra:

Oh shameless creature, I and my words and
my deeds make you speak much in excess.¹²⁸

Note that Clytemnestra specifically states that Electra has been *made* to say too much through her (i.e., Clytemnestra's) own words and actions. And Electra follows Clytemnestra in believing that the connection between words and actions is very close.¹²⁹

The deeds [*erga*] find the *logos*.¹³⁰

We have now seen several ways in which logos is *deinon* because of *chronos* in the *Electra*. First, logos exceeds the control of speakers, and this exceeding occurs through chains of further logoi. These further logoi, which are more than words and arguments, are articulated as responses, often very appropriate ones, but it is difficult to discern that which is *deinon*, to know which word is well spoken. Thus it is easy to speak a *deinon* word (or do a *deinon* thing) and enter into the *deinon*. Right speaking, thinking, and acting are a matter of getting the time right, but even hitting upon the *kairos* does not neutralize the *deinon*. This is because of *chronos*, because of the time through which logos extends. The most penetrating response to the moment can open up oneself and one's community to destruction through the operation of this logos in time. Humans thus do not fall into the *deinon* only because of bad luck, weak character, or limited intelligence. Humans at their best are most in the *deinon* because they are most human. Logos counter-turns through time because that is what it is. This is the lesson of Oedipus and Ajax, also of Thucydides's Pericles.

Of all humans, Oedipus is said to be the most *deinon*. Why? Vernant writes:

The Sphinx's question was: What is the creature with one voice that has two, three, and four legs? Confusing and mixing them up, it referred to the three successive ages of man that he can only know one after another: He is a child when he crawls on four legs, an adult when he stands firmly on his two feet, and an old man leaning on his stick. By identifying himself simultaneously with his young children and his old father, Oedipus, the man standing on his two feet, obliterates the barriers that ought to keep the father strictly separate from the sons and the grandfather so that each human generation occupies its appointed place both in the sequence of time and in the order of the city. Here is the last tragic reversal: It is his victory over the Sphinx that turns Oedipus into, not the solution that he guessed, but the very question posed, not a man like other men but a creature of confusion and chaos, the only creature (we are told) of all those that live upon the earth, in the air or in the water who has "changed his nature" instead of keeping it clear and distinct. As formulated by the Sphinx then, the riddle of man does have a solution but it is one that recoils against the monster's victor, the solver of riddles, and reveals him to himself to be a kind of monster, man in the shape of a riddle – and this time a riddle to which there is no solution.¹³¹

Vernant's comments are very astute, but I object to his notion that it is Oedipus alone who is monstrous, in contrast to all other humans. Oedipus solves the riddle of the human for the human; he is the envy of humans. By solving the riddle, Oedipus proves himself the most adept of humans at the most human of activities – dividing, and, in particular,

dividing up time. Vernant suggests that other humans succeed in remaining “clear and distinct”; indeed, Vernant specifically states that it is from the perspective of the audience that boundaries are maintained. Tragic protagonists on stage are at sea amid ambiguous terms such as *deinon*, but to the audience this confusion is *transparent*.¹³² I question whether the confusion caused by logos can be limited to the stage. All humans are the most *deinon* because they are at sea in logos. As humans we could do no better than with Oedipus (or Alcibiades) as our captain. It is Oedipus’s fate that reveals how *deinon* we are.

“Use logos!” This is Teiresias’s order and taunt to Oedipus, he whom Teiresias recognizes as excelling in solving riddles, in mastering the logos. Teiresias also acknowledges Oedipus’s eagerness to help his polis, an eagerness emphasized right from the start of the play,¹³³ and we should not forget that Oedipus succeeds in saving the city once again. Already in these scenes logoi are *deinoi*: Oedipus can curse himself, there can be heavy foreshadowing of the consequences of this curse (for instance, the references to light;¹³⁴ interestingly, Ajax too is associated with light), and Teiresias can use a word such as *deinopous* (“uncanny foot”) without Oedipus grasping this word’s significance even as he insists that he is trying to learn from Teiresias’s words.¹³⁵ Of course, Oedipus will eventually understand, but the futility of this understanding will itself be *deinon*.¹³⁶ The chorus too will know what sort of creature Oedipus is:

Oh suffering *deinon* for men to see,
Oh most *deinon* of any such as
I have yet encountered.¹³⁷

Not only is Oedipus himself *deinon*, but his fate as the most *deinon* is explicitly related to logos as well as to *chronos*: Teiresias’s words bring out the *deinon*, Oedipus’s words about Creon are *deinon*, Apollo’s oracle announces the *deinon*, Oedipus’s cry upon seeing Iokaste is *deinon*, and, most strikingly, the words revealing the truth of Oedipus’s birth are *deinon*.¹³⁸ The shepherd says:

Alas, to that I have come, to that which is *deinon* to bring to logos.¹³⁹

Oedipus also realizes that these words are the *deinon*:

And I in listening, but nevertheless it must be heard.¹⁴⁰

As a hero of logos, Oedipus *must* listen, must open himself to logos. It is important that Oedipus uses this impersonal construction for listening to that which is *deinon* because such constructions mark the intransigence

of heroes, particularly Sophoclean heroes.¹⁴¹ Oedipus will not run from the *deinon*; indeed, he, the hero of logos, seems to jump into it.¹⁴² Thus, it is not surprising that in the end Oedipus claims that he would make himself deaf as well as blind.¹⁴³ In so doing he would not only (seem to) escape the realm of Apollo (implicated many times over in Oedipus's *atē*),¹⁴⁴ but also escape the realm of mortals altogether.¹⁴⁵ These realms are (largely) identical: when one is human one lives amid logos, amid Apollo, and thus one is the most *deinon* creature.

In line 919 of *Oedipus Rex* Iokaste appeals to Apollo as "the nearest." The irony of Iokaste praying to Apollo at all, much less as the one who is nearest, is intimately linked with the *deinon* power of logos. Yet this irony is very complex because Iokaste is in one sense correct: Apollo is the nearest; indeed, like Oedipus himself, he is entirely *too* near. It is Apollo's self-realizing oracles to Laius, Oedipus, and Creon (also through Teiresias) that play a causal role in Oedipus's downfall. For instance, Oedipus only leaves Corinth and meets Laius at the crossroads because of an oracle of Apollo. But how close Apollo actually is at this point remains indefinite. In the messenger's account of Oedipus's self-blinding, we find the word *deinon* three times in seven lines. Twice it describes the cries of Oedipus.¹⁴⁶ Oedipus is no longer speaking, and in falling into the *deinon* he is making noises that do not quite fit into ordinary human language. The third use of *deinon* describes that which the humans saw, namely, Oedipus's attempt to escape the human through self-blinding.¹⁴⁷

But how did Oedipus find Iokaste? What led him to utter and then do the *deinon*? We know that many logoi have contributed to this, but what exactly led Oedipus to smash down a door, yelling in a *deinon* way, and literally to fall into the *deinon*? The messenger is not certain, and he twice uses indefinite constructions.¹⁴⁸ We are here surely at the heart of *deinon*, at the very limit of the human, as our captain charges to his doom: is this mysterious someone compelling Oedipus not Apollo? After all, Apollo has advanced the plot at every step; Laius was even on his way to Delphi when he was killed! And yet Apollo himself is not the cause of Oedipus's extraordinary enthusiasm for the polis. And Oedipus's particular area of mastery is logos, and we have seen that once the *deinon* word is spoken, *deinon* compels *deinon*, and so perhaps no divinity is required. Above all, Oedipus resembles the human as described in the Ode to Man: he is the captain of a polis through rough seas, and he has sailed into a storm of *deinon*.¹⁴⁹ In short, he is a paradigm.¹⁵⁰ Like the unclear reference to fate in the *Antigone*, the *deinon* power compelling Oedipus here cannot be spoken. It is, in a sense, divine, but it also emanates from us.

It is Oedipus who protects the polis. He protects the site of human being through preserving logos from confusion. Yet this most *deinon* being who is open to the workings of logos can be as confounded by it in direct proportion to his mastery of it. Indeed, he is capable of undermining the order of the very polis that he saves through the very act of saving it. Those who dramatize the *deinon* for the polis within the confines of festivals are called "tragedians." What shall we call those who discern the *deinon* that pervades the polis beyond the limits of these festivals? I suggest that we call such people "historians." We have already seen how the career of Pericles, in which such precise mastery of the logos is demonstrated, to the great benefit of the polis, opens up the polis to the counterturns of the logos. Most spectacular in this regard is Pericles's ambitious and original mobilization of the power of eros.

Oedipus's confusion is bound up with a confounding of time, both by him and by Apollo. The chorus claims that Oedipus has been discovered by "all-seeing" time,¹⁵¹ and this despite the clear role that Apollo plays in making Oedipus a monster and then uncovering him as such. What is the connection between Apollo and time? Time's role in Oedipus's downfall and its association with Apollo are not accidental. The play in which this connection between time and tragedy is best illuminated is the *Ajax*.

Ajax is *deinon* and is caught in a web of logoi that are *deinoi*.¹⁵² Ajax has been punished with the *deinon* for having spoken *deinon* and unspeakable words,¹⁵³ not because of his desire for vengeance upon the army for rewarding Odysseus with Achilles's armor.¹⁵⁴ Ajax's outsized desire for vengeance is rather similar to that of Athena, which speaks to his extrahuman excessiveness but does not explain his specific fate. What were the *deinon* words that he spoke that brought Athena's wrath down upon him? According to Calchas, Ajax insisted that he did not need the help of the goddess to hold his ground. It is these words, words that exalted only his own humanity, that are labeled not to be minded as a human.¹⁵⁵

This is not the only way in which logos is implicated in Ajax's downfall. Throughout the scene in which Ajax is mad, in which he is out of his mind, Athena speaks to him and claims to be his ally.¹⁵⁶ Ajax himself will agree that Athena is his ally (Oedipus has a similar confusion about his allies).¹⁵⁷ Logos, operating in time, is the precondition for such irony. Ajax's trusted ally is his worst enemy (on account of ill-spoken words), and his worst enemy (Odysseus) will turn out to be a friend. Ajax himself notes this very human movement, seemingly in resignation but, as we later learn, actually in disgust.¹⁵⁸

Ajax is the one who bears the shield;¹⁵⁹ his borders are meant to be unmovable, but they are not. In maintaining that he can stand alone, Ajax seeks to transcend the human.¹⁶⁰ Having failed in this, he, like Oedipus, will strike out at his humanity. In striving to maintain boundaries, Ajax demonstrates that he does not understand that boundaries are *deinon*, that they require two sides, and that he who holds the line may well be (may have to be) on the other side of it. And thus Ajax's punishment is, appropriately, a madness of conflation, animal with human, friend with foe. Like Oedipus, the boldest protector of the human ends up outside the human altogether; even the *deinon* is subject to change, to time. The chorus muses on time's passing and, like Menelaus,¹⁶¹ does not quite understand the way in which time is implicated in Ajax's destruction.¹⁶²

Ajax, however, begins his long "deception speech" in the following way:

All things long and numberless time brings
to being (*phuein*) in obscurity, and that which has been revealed, it hides.¹⁶³

Time is the agent, not a human, and not even a god (not Athena); it is *time*, which itself operates in obscurity, that brings all things to the light and then hides all things. Ajax then observes that time overcomes the oath that is *deinon* and the spirit that is exceedingly rigid, and this parallelism signals the deep parallel between being exceedingly rigid and being *deinon*.¹⁶⁴ But which creature is most reliant on oaths, most in danger of being exceedingly rigid, that is, of missing the measure? This is a passage about the time that humans live in above all. The operation of time is obscure, but its power overwhelms those human institutions and values, such as oaths and the valorization of constancy, that exist to counteract its power. Logos is itself such an institution, as well as the precondition for all such institutions.

Ajax's deception speech hits the *kairos* because it allows him to go in peace, having not exactly lied in his last public words, and yet the speech, read *again*, tells us not only that Ajax is going to kill himself but why. He, like Oedipus, is a victim of the counterturning of human time. The great shield bearer, he, who more than any of the heroes at Troy, is most great as a human, not for being god-beloved, strikes out at himself in despair at having been deprived of the great name that he thought was his constant possession precisely because he had accomplished what he had as a man. What logos reveals, it hides, and it does so obscurely. It is especially poignant and relevant that Ajax, the great wall, should reach out, in his last words, off the stage in kinship to the Athenians,¹⁶⁵

the play's sponsors and audience, the great builders of walls, the great admirers of constancy, seemingly certain in themselves, and they whose restless energy and ambition will lead them to make a faraway enemy who is also all too near, namely, the innovative democracy of Syracuse, complete with Periclean first citizen.

Euripides

Euripides does not make a radical break with Sophoclean thinking about *deinon*, but he does offer subtle refinements of his own. As in Sophocles, *deinon* remains characteristic of the human realm.¹⁶⁶ Orestes suffers the *deinon* from Aegisthus and will return the favor.¹⁶⁷ The Furies remain *deinon*, as do persuasion, cries, and even a confused, hence mad, state of mind.¹⁶⁸ The eros sent by Aphrodite to consume Phaedra is *deinon*.¹⁶⁹ Provocatively, Helen is a *deinon* thing in the mouths of the Argives,¹⁷⁰ presumably because of her ability to instigate and sustain dreadful chains of events out of all control. The *deinon* also remains a matter of debate within the House of Atreus. There is no doubt that Orestes, the matricide, is suffering the *deinon*, but is this not appropriate for one who has also done it? Menelaus thinks so.¹⁷¹ Yet Orestes counters that one must do the *deinon* in order to preserve boundaries against a pernicious new *nomos*.¹⁷² What is this *nomos* that must be fought with the *deinon*? It is wives killing their husbands and getting away with it. Remember the Lemnian thing!

Hecuba certainly remembers. Here she is speaking with Agamemnon about bringing vengeance on Polymestor for the treacherous murder of her son:

Ag: How will women overpower men?

He: *Deinon* is the greater number, with tricks hard to fight against.

Ag. *Deinon*. Nevertheless I doubt the strength of women.

He: Why? Did women not destroy the children of Aegyptus
and wholly banish males from Lemnos?¹⁷³

Polymestor will agree about the nature of the punishment he will receive from Hecuba; it will be *deinon*, twice *deinon* in fact.¹⁷⁴ The power of women to destroy men through trickery remains a power that is *deinon*; Lemnos remains the measure.

The *Hecuba*, a play saturated with reflection on logos, contains several other *deinon*-related insights. The chorus says that Hecuba's daughter Polyxena has a *deinon* character.¹⁷⁵ By "character" here, the chorus does not mean our word "character" so much as a distinctive imprint, a mark,

a sign for mortals. The mark of Polyxena is of the good, and the mark is strange because it impels to ever greater things. Such self-exceeding marks are *deinon*. Hecuba concurs, noting that bad land, if well treated, can yield a good crop. Not so a bad person. This disanalogy between people and land is *deinon*.¹⁷⁶ Yet this saying too will turn out to be false inasmuch as Hecuba will herself turn from goodness to savagery.

It is this mutability of human affairs (familiar to Ajax and Oedipus) that is *deinon*,¹⁷⁷ but in Euripides this mutability will be connected even more explicitly to *logos*, particularly to signs. Thus Theseus wishes for a true way to test the worth of mortals just when he ought to trust his son Hippolytus.¹⁷⁸ Instead of wishing for a method of foresight, Theseus needs to just look at what is before him with greater discernment. Even more remarkably, Medea makes a similar lament about Jason,¹⁷⁹ but she will use the ambiguous nature of signs to her advantage. Her *logos* will persuade Jason to take the beautiful but fatal gifts to his new wife. No sooner does Medea lament the lack of a means to test mortals than the chorus declares that it is *deinon* for friends to clash in hate;¹⁸⁰ Medea will soon show just how *deinon*. In Euripides we see that the *deinon* never takes a holiday. Understanding the *deinon* nature of *logos* does not protect one from it (consider Hecuba or Pericles) or prevent one from leaping into it (consider Theseus or Oedipus or Diodotus); nor, however, does it stop one from manipulating it (consider Medea or Alcibiades).¹⁸¹

The *Iphigenia at Aulis* is an especially profound play in which we find many famous aspects of Euripides's craft: the receding gods, the shrinking traditional heroes, and the jarring contemporaneity. But even more extraordinary is the fact that this play dramatizes the often referred to, but much less often articulated, events that motivate a large part of epic as well as tragedy. There is no question that the murder of Iphigenia by her father is *deinon*,¹⁸² but there is some confusion as to what else is *deinon*.¹⁸³ Certainly Agamemnon thinks that it would be *deinon* to dare to murder his child, but he also thinks it would be *deinon* for him *not* to.¹⁸⁴ And this is not the only *deinon* thing to which Agamemnon refers. He refers to the vows made by Helen's suitors as *deinon*.¹⁸⁵ The vows of mutual destruction were so intense that they precipitated the vow of mutual aid that will begin the Trojan War – *deinon* compels *deinon*. This is an important gloss on what Ajax meant by *deinon* oaths, by an exceedingly rigid spirit. Was there a moment for flexibility or would such a call have been doomed to be as self-defeating as that of Haemon? Further, and more immediately, Agamemnon fears the mob, especially as led by the ever-flexible Odysseus, in pursuit of his own glory, a *deinon* evil.¹⁸⁶ This

mob will demand the sacrifice of the girl in order to be able to plunder Troy, and when it does so, Clytemnestra will name it *deinon* directly.¹⁸⁷ Here one thinks of the *cleruchy* set up on Mytilene, of how, in fact, a well-functioning democracy may be exceedingly imperialist.

There are two key points here. First, whether or not Agamemnon's calculations are correct (they are certainly cowardly), he does at least understand that he is acting amid a chain of events from which he would dearly like to extricate himself. And so it is not his fault; the logoi of Calchas have driven him out of his mind.¹⁸⁸ But there is also the unique role given to fear, particularly to fear of the mob, particularly to a mob worked up by Odysseus, particularly by an Odysseus motivated by the pursuit of glory. Diodotus and Nicias are similarly fearful, with spectacularly tragic results.¹⁸⁹ But what chance does any expedition have without the men motivated by pursuit of glory? What chance does Athens have without such men emerging and leading the people? If such ambition is a *deinon* evil, it is only because sometimes, somehow, it misses the measure.

One could say that Euripides's Agamemnon, like Medea, would like to win through wordplay; yet it is clear that he, like Medea and Hecuba, will nevertheless lose his humanity. In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus's Agamemnon leaps into the *deinon*, but this does not help, though perhaps he is the greater for it. Euripides's Agamemnon strives to avoid the *deinon*; he is not a larger-than-life hero, he feels forced into it, and this makes him somewhat remarkable for a tragic protagonist. Perhaps this is how Harmodius and Aristogeiton felt as they determined to at least do *something* before they were killed. Or perhaps the better analogy is that of Nicias, facing the *deinon* once defeat is inevitable for an expedition launched (and undermined) by a *deinon* eros, an eros he himself recognized as such and attempted to prevent (but only encouraged) through his logos. Once confronted by the *deinon*, Agamemnon recognizes his powerlessness; he does not rebel, he submits, and he blames others (and with some justification). But, as with Nicias, this makes no difference to what happens to him or to his expedition.

The distance separating Euripides from Thucydides is thus in many ways quite small, and we will use the *Bacchae* as a final bridge. Taken together, the *Iphigenia at Aulis* and the *Bacchae* do in a sense end tragedy.¹⁹⁰ Both plays explore the beginnings of tragedy from the perspective of what tragedy has become. *Deinon* is one signifier of the reversal that occurs between Pentheus and Dionysus; Pentheus, who once meted out the *deinon*, will now suffer it.¹⁹¹ Yet most striking is its triple appearance in one line where Pentheus is "*deinon*, *deinon* and will suffer

the *deinon*”¹⁹² and its direct application to Dionysus himself as “most *deinon*.”¹⁹³ Dionysus had already labeled Pentheus *deinon*¹⁹⁴ when Dionysus announces that, despite his assurances to the contrary,¹⁹⁵ he will parade Pentheus dressed as a woman through Thebes in order to incur laughter. Indeed, this is how Pentheus will enter Hades.

Why must this permanent demonstration happen? Because of Pentheus’s earlier threats against Dionysus with which he (Pentheus) was so *deinon*. *Deinon* in this play is particularly peculiar. On the one hand, Pentheus is *deinon* in a very familiar way; he has uttered threats against a god, he has overstepped the limit of the human, and he will thus be destroyed in a manner even more public than the means by which he had belittled the god. Yet Dionysus will describe *himself* as most *deinon*, and so it seems that the goal of parading Pentheus is to demonstrate who is really *deinon*, namely, Dionysus. This is almost a regressive assertion, a return to Homer, where it is indeed the gods, especially gods for some reason on the edge of the human or interacting with humans, who are *deinon*.

The triple appearance of *deinon* in one line is thus part of a larger and dangerous multiplication of the *deinon* within the play. Pentheus has been *deinon* by means of threats and will suffer the *deinon*, while Dionysus is most *deinon* (and most gentle) and has also suffered the *deinon*.¹⁹⁶ Agave claims that Dionysus’s attack on the royal house is *deinon*,¹⁹⁷ and Cadmus understands the *deinon* as describing the space into which he has entered, a space in which no peace¹⁹⁸ is possible.¹⁹⁹

This confused expansion of the *deinon* is suggestive of a great deal (e.g., the functioning of *logos*), but I would like to emphasize here only its boundless quality and demand for presentation. The *deinon* reduplicates itself and, even though it may take generations,²⁰⁰ it will burst out into the open. As the god who is most *deinon*, Dionysus demands presentation again and again and will accept no limits to his epiphany.²⁰¹ Dionysus is the god of repeated ritual communal spectacle, that is, theater. But can this repeated spectacle be limited to the stage? Is Dionysus himself not the god of transgression?

As a play about Dionysus, the *Bacchae* is about the violence required to maintain the open space in which humans dwell.²⁰² Dionysus tells us in the first line of the play that he has come to Thebes; he will never depart. In fact, Dionysus is never more present than after he “disappears,” after having abandoned his mortal coil. There is also a sense in which Dionysus has never left, has *always* been in Thebes.²⁰³ And yet Dionysus, whether away (in the East), ignored (as by Pentheus and the Theban state), or

hidden (as in his disguise), is now going to become manifest. Dionysus says so four times in his opening speech.²⁰⁴ In fact, his entire campaign through Asia and now into Greece is aimed at this self-revelation. The more detail Dionysus gives to his journey, the more detail he gives to his own epiphany, to the very thing that is his end. One should also note Dionysus's striking early command to the chorus: they are to make a crash so that Thebes may *see*.²⁰⁵ This mixed metaphor can be seen as structuring the role of the chorus throughout the play because their sounds are to be part of Dionysus's self-manifestation.²⁰⁶ All is in the service of vision, but not a simple one. Dionysus's epiphany is also his defense of his mother, Semele.²⁰⁷ This self-manifestation operates on many levels, including the polemical and the temporal. Dionysus must be seen as Dionysus, as the son of Zeus, as the son of Semele, as he who has traveled through Asia, as he who is to be worshipped in a particular way. Most oddly, though new, Dionysus, as a divinity, must be recognized as always having been a divinity.

There is little reason to doubt what Dionysus says in the Prologue that what follows is about his self-manifestation, given the role of prologues more generally, what will happen in the play, and the general desire of gods to be recognized (such as Aphrodite in the *Hippolytus*). Nevertheless, Dionysus's desire for self-manifestation is recognized by virtually every other protagonist in the play, and since the phenomenon of disclosure itself is central to our argument, we will spend another moment on its role in the *Bacchae*.

The most persistent and striking examples of others echoing Dionysus is provided by the chorus. All of the choral odes, especially the first one, contribute to a further articulation of the power that is Dionysus. The first ode tells of Dionysus's history, his attributes, and even offers a sample ritual.²⁰⁸ Teiresias's speech defending his somewhat cynical acceptance of Dionysus (it is certainly partly a parody of sophistical reasoning), even taken as somewhat self-defeating in its cleverness, contains a further elaboration of Dionysus's attributes.²⁰⁹ But the most striking collaboration is contained in a later chorus, which, repeating the story of Dionysus's birth, has Zeus cry out the following:

I reveal you O Bacchus
to be so named in Thebes.²¹⁰

Dionysus is nothing other than his being manifest by Zeus, which is itself nothing other than being *named* in *Thebes*. Indeed, this would seem to explain Dionysus's later insistence that all has been the will of Zeus and

his complaint that he had no name in Thebes, the first Greek city to which he has come.²¹¹ Dionysus's naming, his showing himself, is his birth, and this birth has been brought to term by Zeus himself.²¹² Moreover, Zeus has singled out Thebes for this birth. Others are worshiping Dionysus already, but Thebes has special significance. The acknowledgment of the Thebans, the coming home of Dionysus, is the manifestation of Dionysus's divinity insofar as divinities are always divinities. That is, Dionysus is divine, will be divine, was divine, and always will have been divine.²¹³ No other city can provide Dionysus with this particular recognition, and thus no other city has as much at stake in resisting Dionysus; that is, Pentheus is not only rejecting a new god, but is himself defending *his* mother and his mother's honor. As such, his resistance will allow free reign for Dionysus's awesome self-demonstration. The battle for identity is most hard fought at the origin.

This leads us to the indirect role of much of the play in Dionysus's epiphany. Most worthy of attention here are the two long messenger speeches about the miracles on Cithaeron, as well as the joint narrative between Dionysus and the chorus concerning the collapse of the House of Pentheus. No doubt all of these scenes have a number of functions, including that of allusions to rituals that will be set up in Dionysus's honor. What I wish to emphasize is their sheer mass. Athena makes Ajax mad; she manifests her power, but then she leaves and the drama is about the aftermath. The disaster brought on by Aphrodite does run through the entire *Hippolytus*, but she herself does not. That is to say that Aphrodite, having set in motion a calamity for the sake of vengeance, also withdraws to allow events to take their course. Again, the drama is about the interaction of humans caught within this chain of events. In the *Bacchae*, by contrast, Dionysus not only remains on stage, not only does he act as a director of his own epiphany, but the bulk of the play just *is* about his power.

As a self-reflective engagement on the challenge posed by manifesting, the *Bacchae* points toward Thucydides, who must also make manifest that which is hidden.²¹⁴ In Thucydides the gods have withdrawn entirely, but, already in the *Bacchae*, the gods do not just hide themselves, they hide themselves in a riddling way and they bide their time,²¹⁵ even though this is a play with a god on stage much of the time! Hence the chorus considers it a light cost to have respect for that which is divine.²¹⁶ These words of the chorus are given life by the action of the play. Dionysus has returned to Thebes in disguise, manifesting himself through riddles to

Pentheus. Though Pentheus often does not get the irony in Dionysus's words, he knows enough to complain repeatedly about Dionysus's verbal gamesmanship,²¹⁷ and indeed, Pentheus's last words before the fateful "ah" of Dionysus that signals the onset of his (vision-obsessed) madness are that Dionysus be quiet.²¹⁸

Ultimately, Pentheus knows very well who he is;²¹⁹ he is Agave's child. Yet he, like his mother,²²⁰ does not yet understand the full significance of these words, just as he evidently does not grasp what is implicit in his own name²²¹ or, for that matter, in his kinship with Actaeon.²²² At the end of the play, Cadmus reminds us one last time about the relation between Pentheus and his name.²²³ The role of names here is not an unfathomable mystery; rather, names, a part of *logos*, are among the manifold details that create and nourish us in a manner that is by definition unobtrusive. It deserves emphasis here that Thucydides not only offers us his own name, but also sets out to explain the name "Hellas" as bound up with power. And, as we have already seen, this is only one of many analyses of names and of *logos* more generally. Dionysus as a god, as the god of the spectacle, is particularly well suited to draw out the hidden connections that have been left implicit. How are humans to make themselves explicit?

Thucydides Revisited (The *Deinon* and *Epieikeia*)

The *deinon* cannot be kept in bounds by the tragic stage. In the *Bacchae*, the task of manifesting is both necessary and fraught with danger for mortals. At the beginning of this chapter we saw that Thucydides relates the *deinon* to *logos*. Moreover, we saw that the problems of identity captured in Thucydides's treatment of the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton largely parallel the challenges facing tragic protagonists – most obviously, Oedipus and Pentheus. There are many other parallels between Thucydides's use of *deinon* and that of the tragedians. These parallels should be noted on at least two registers. First, they should indicate that Thucydides's world is continuous with that of the tragedians in consistently and ubiquitously addressing a familiar, open-ended, and significant concern with what is *deinon*. Second, as with all of the authors discussed so far, Thucydides's thinking about the *deinon* goes a little further than what preceded it. In Thucydides's case, what is most striking is the simple fact that we are still amid the *deinon* when in the world of men and contemporary events, without the gods. No doubt many instances of *deinon* are pedestrian in a manner reminiscent of Hesiod, like using it to describe the

underwater stockade of the Syracusans,²²⁴ but even this is interesting as it is a clever trap set up by the enemy most like the Athenians themselves.

In Thucydides, *deinon* is confined to the human realm, mostly appears in speeches, and is often explicitly a matter of perspective,²²⁵ particularly a perspective on the present.²²⁶ Both Lamachus and later Demosthenes insist that their respective expeditions will never be as *deinon* as when first seen by the Syracusans.²²⁷ Barbarian enemies appear to be *deinon* but are not really so, according to Brasidas,²²⁸ who, though a Spartan, uses the rhetoric of *deinon* to good effect on two other occasions,²²⁹ as well as in a sharp analysis of what is *deinon* before the battle of Amphipolis: a second force is more *deinon* than the one with which an enemy is already engaged.²³⁰ The Spartans at Pylos suffer when the Athenian light troops realize that the Spartan hoplites are not so *deinon* after all.²³¹ Most poignantly, the Athenian flight from Syracuse is *deinon*, and not only because of its strategic and tactical implications, but because the Athenians perceived things painful in regards to bare vision (*opsis*) as well as to their point of view (*gnome*).²³²

Deinon is also used for surprising reversals; thus, according to the Corinthians, it would be *deinon* for other Greeks not to pay as much for freedom as they now pay for their slavery.²³³ The Corinthians also believe that relating to the *deinon* is what distinguishes Spartans from Athenians: the Athenians are hopeful amid the *deinon*, while the Spartans despair.²³⁴ Apparently, Pericles agrees:²³⁵

Those men [namely, the Athenians] would rightly be judged strongest in spirit, who recognizing [verbal form of *gnome*] that which is *deinon* as well as that which is pleasurable most clearly [superlative of *saphes*], do not on account of these things turn away from dangers.²³⁶

At this moment in the Funeral Oration, Pericles is extolling the particularly Athenian virtues of both deliberating and acting. Before exploring where this leads, it is worthwhile to attend to the aspects of this passage relevant to our discussion. First, we note that, as was the case in Homer, that which is *deinon* must be perceived; however, unlike in Homer, but as in tragedy, the *deinon* is now no particular thing and certainly not a divine thing. Furthermore, there arises the issue of clarity because the Athenians do not just recognize the *deinon*, they recognize it most clearly. This could be read as a reference to the Athenian passion for tragedy. On this reading, Pericles would be anticipating Nietzsche by arguing that the tragic art form that thrived in Athens at the height of its political

endeavors was a symbol of its strength. Without going quite that far, Pericles is certainly maintaining that there is a connection between Athenian greatness and the achievement of clarity about what is *deinon*.²³⁷ But what is *deinon* in this context other than a reference to what is manifested by tragedy?

In the third book of the *History*, which Euben rightly identifies as having the structure of a tragic trilogy,²³⁸ we find the issue of the *deinon* raised often (with at least twenty mentions, especially in the speeches of Cleon and Diodotus). Here is Cleon's interpretation of the *deinon*:

And the most *deinon* thing of all, if nothing we set down will be firm of the things we decide upon, is that we will not recognize [verbal form of *gnome*] that a polis with worse laws that are immoveable is better off than a polis with good, but ineffective, laws. [...] ²³⁹

At first, this appears to be a direct rebuttal of Pericles because the Athenian passion for discussion is, according to Cleon, hardly a virtue, but precisely that which is most *deinon*. Also, Cleon does not seem to have absorbed the lesson of Ajax, namely, that it is not given to humans to be immovable. Nevertheless, though time plagues our *deinon* oaths and laws, we must still make them and try to abide by them precisely because we are the creatures in time; Pericles too had recognized the importance of firmness and contrasted his own constancy with that of his countrymen.²⁴⁰

Cleon and Pericles also agree that the *deinon* is somehow all about that which is *recognized*. Indeed, they agree that the *deinon* must be clearly recognized. What the Athenians risk losing through all their discussion is the spur to action, and it is Pericles above all who praises the Athenian propensity to act amid the *deinon*. Cleon explicitly urges the Athenians to remember the *deinon* that hung over them because of the Mytilenians.²⁴¹ Still, the standard interpretation that Cleon is offering an opposing vision of Athens and of the *deinon* also remains valid; he is importing not only courtroom rhetoric, but tragic rhetoric, in order to undermine the possibility of reasoned deliberation and to goad the Athenians to commit an atrocity. Nevertheless, Pericles does not elaborate upon what the *deinon* might be, nor does he articulate the appropriate policy for dealing with trusted allies that rebel when one is already in dire straits and when the war can be expected to be ongoing. How, in any case, could he have done so? Taking off from Pericles, Cleon makes a plausible case for dealing with the current situation (i.e., has striven for the *kairos*).

And so Diodotus, as we have seen, directly responding to Cleon, but also referencing Pericles (note, for instance, the repeat of the trope of turning), argues for a different action:

And it is simply impossible and rather naive, whoever supposes a human being, goaded on and passionate to do some thing, can be turned aside either by strong laws or by any other *deinon* thing.²⁴²

Diodotus could have pointed to the Athenians themselves, as described by Pericles, as an example of the fact that people may recognize the *deinon* most clearly and dare to act within it.²⁴³ If this is so, Diodotus asks, in what way will enforcing the ultimate penalty upon the Mytileneans aid Athens? The ultimate penalty does not deter the Athenians, it did not deter the Mytileneans,²⁴⁴ and it will not deter any of Athens's other subject cities from rebelling should the opportunity present itself.

For Creon, the most *deinon* thing emerges from *within* the polis (i.e., ineffectual laws), while Diodotus seems to locate it *without* (physical destruction by external foes). At the same time, Diodotus does place the tendency to act within the *deinon* in humans generally, while for Cleon the ultimate effect of internal confusion within a polis appears to be vulnerability to other poleis. The *deinon* is expansive, hard to perceive, and located nowhere in particular. It is not even clear if one should dare the *deinon* or dare in spite of being amid the *deinon*. Cleon seems to believe that, amid the *deinon* into which the Mytileneans have plunged Athens, it would be most *deinon* not to inflict the *deinon* upon the Mytileneans (namely, total destruction). Diodotus sees no point to committing the *deinon* and nothing special in the fact that humans act despite it,²⁴⁵ and he even entertains the idea that no one willingly enters the *deinon*,²⁴⁶ that it is always a matter of miscalculation, which would seem to run *counter* to Pericles's praise of the Athenians.

This confusion about what is *deinon*, even in the speech of Diodotus, is magnified but also, in a sense, explained when one considers his aside that it is no longer possible in Athens for a statesman to be straightforward with the fickle Athenian demos.²⁴⁷ In this passage Diodotus claims that he who would offer beneficial advice must resort to the same deception as he who is advancing the most *deinon* counsels. Just as Diodotus's presumably insincere plea to make the Mytilenians useful will have the unexpected result of fanning civil war, so too this fear of the Athenian people will doom the Syracusan Expedition, as Nicias will not withdraw in a timely manner for fear of the Athenian demos. For, Nicias says, those of the Athenians who now, in Sicily, cry that they are amid the *deinon*, which

perhaps is an insinuation of deliberate melodrama, will change their tune and accuse Nicias of treason when back in Athens.²⁴⁸ The *deinon* has multiplied in the Athenian Empire at least as much as it had in the House of Atreus.

There are, in addition, other voices in this trilogy. The Plataeans claim that it would be *deinon* for the Spartans to kill their former allies on behalf of their former enemies (the Thebans).²⁴⁹ The Thebans reply that it was *deinon* for the Plataeans to kill prisoners who had surrendered;²⁵⁰ the events to which the Thebans refer here are the aftermath of their confused entry into Plataea in a time of peace when war was seen to be inevitable. Thus the Plataeans urge the Spartans to avoid doing the *deinon* thing, while the Thebans urge the Spartans to punish those who committed a *deinon* thing. What everyone appears to agree upon is that the *deinon* exceeds *nomos*, that which is customary, whether it be rebelling against an ally, massacring a rebel city's population regardless of guilt, destroying a city that had only shortly before been an ally, or killing prisoners.

All of which returns us to the question of what is most *deinon* in Thucydides, which we have seen in one instance was the excessive daring that emerges from the striving at the heart of political life.²⁵¹ This passage is from the account of *stasis* in Corcyra, the final piece of the Book Three trilogy. Yet we now recognize the extent to which the *deinon* as a question was already in play. In fact, the very recognition of this play is a decisive subtlety made possible by the structure of Thucydides's *History* itself. In Sophocles's *Electra*, we are told that *deinon* compelled further *deinon*; Thucydides shows us such compulsion through time and space. At a climactic point in his work, Herodotus too presents us with a chain of argument about the *deinon*. Is it *deinon* for the Persians to punish the Greeks or not to punish them?²⁵² The debate will go back and forth²⁵³ and will be decided through deceptive divine intervention (i.e., Xerxes's dream). In Thucydides there is no such intervention, and the debate rages on beyond any single decision or royal court.²⁵⁴

This association between the *deinon* and the life of the polis goes deeper still. Thucydides tells us that what was most *deinon* about the Plague was not the suffering of the afflicted but the communal breakdown, because those who tended to the dead would get sick as well, which meant that those with the disease increasingly suffered alone.²⁵⁵ This cyclical yet expanding movement should be familiar by now; it traces the path of Agamemnon's careless word as well as the competition within Greek, particularly Athenian, civic life. Returning to the Archaeology, it traces

the advent of civilization itself and now, through *stasis* and Plague, it traces its dissolution. Returning to Corcyra and Thucydides's description of the exchange in norms, this list is, in a sense, Thucydides's Shield of Achilles, namely, a reflection of the world at peace that is destroyed by the war. Thinking about the *deinon* allows us to see what has been lost in a new way.

The Athenians boast of their *epieikeia* in contrast to other empires.²⁵⁶ In the other great tragedy that seemingly announces the end of this uniquely Athenian art form, Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonus*, *epieikeia* is associated with and dramatically demonstrated by the Athenian hero Theseus.²⁵⁷ Democritus writes of *epieikeia* as marking the limit when competitiveness, otherwise a good, harms the community.²⁵⁸ Strikingly, both Cleon and Diodotus disavow *epieikeia* as a norm to be appealed to in the context of the Mytilenian Debate.²⁵⁹ In the midst of the Plataean Debate, another dispute as to the location of the *deinon*, the Thebans concede that perhaps it was not *epieikeia* that they entered Plataea uninvited when there was peace, but they insist that the Plataean response was far worse.²⁶⁰ Once again, it is important to remember that the Thebans crossed the bounds of *epieikeia* because they foresaw an inevitability that they themselves advanced with their foresight.

The word *epieikeia* has its root in *eikos*, namely, in what is both probable and appropriate. By this point, Gorgias, apparently in a funeral oration given to the Athenians, has already contrasted self-willed (*authades*) justice (*dike*) with mild (*praos*) *epieikeia*.²⁶¹ Standard translations of *epieikeia* are "fairness," "leniency," or "equity." Equity is an especially interesting translation because it connects *epieikeia* with a specific tradition in law that has roots in Aristotle's discussion of *epieikeia*, particularly in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁶²

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*,²⁶³ Aristotle states that *epieikeia* is a "correction of legal justice," though it is not itself legal. He further explains the need for this corrective as a product of the necessarily general nature of legal rules and recognizes that not all can be determined by law, and it is in this regard that he offers the image of the leaden measuring device used by Lesbian builders. Just as this flexible leaden rule can bend to the shape of the stone, so can specific decrees (versus general laws) be issued to meet the specifics of a case. Finally, and most importantly in our context, the person who is characterized by *epieikeia* is he who does equitable things both by choice and habit, is not a "stickler for his legal share," and is willing to accept less even when he has law on his side.²⁶⁴

Aristotle's discussion of *epieikeia* in the *Rhetoric* is even more relevant because it reflects on the ethos that it was commonly understood that

a man of *epieikeia* had. About this ethos, Aristotle advises his students as follows:

And it is *epieikeia* to excuse things characteristically human. And to look not to the law but toward the lawgiver; and not to the letter of the law, but to the intention of the lawgiver; and not to the action but to the purpose; and not to the part but to the whole; not to how someone is now, but to how he was, either always or most of the time; and to remember being treated well rather than badly, and the good received rather than done. And to be patient though being wronged. And to prefer to be judged by reason [logos] over deeds. And to prefer to go to arbitration rather than court. For the arbitrator sees that which is *epieikeia*, but the citizen-juror only the law. And it was because of this that the arbitrator was invented, so that *epieikeia* might prevail.²⁶⁵

This may seem to have taken us far off track, though de Romilly also sees a trajectory starting in Thucydides and extending to Aristotle,²⁶⁶ but consider how a polis that valued *epieikeia* would function. In an agonistic society, *epieikeia* is what keeps the society together by creating countervailing cycles of generosity, of accepting loss.²⁶⁷ Among poleis, *epieikeia* could function as a counter to those quick to foresee that conflict was inevitable. If we return to Thucydides's list of changed norms, we see that it is precisely *epieikeia* that has been lost. For instance, it is now better to avenge than avoid an injury,²⁶⁸ and it is more *deinon* for one to *detect* a plot than to successfully carry one out.²⁶⁹ *Deinon* has many meanings in this context; it is clever to detect a plot and it does make one formidable, but it is also *deinon* because it is unclear where all of this detection is going to end; amid signs of conspiracy, which are all too easy to decipher, it is certainly unlikely to end in settling for less than one's due. Indeed, *stasis* in Corcyra begins with a politically motivated lawsuit in which the victorious party refuses to compromise and insists on total vindication.²⁷⁰ Certainly by the time of the Melian Dialogue, the Athenian claim to *epieikeia* has become a complete sham.²⁷¹

Understanding *epieikeia* as that which harnesses the *deinon* in order to maintain the polis against the *deinon* power of competition helps further elucidate the famous claim about the change in the valuation of deeds that resulted from the civil war in Corcyra.²⁷² Here is the passage:

And the common sense [as emerging from common decency] evaluative language [*onomata*] for deeds [*erga*] changed as regards justification.

Among the difficulties in this extremely dense sentence is what significance to give the word *ἐῶθυϊαν*, translated as "common sense." What does it add beyond the word, *axiosis*, here translated as "evaluative"? Surely

evaluation does not emerge from nowhere. When we considered Thucydides's claim that he thought this war "most worthy of relation," another word based on the verb *axioō*, we understood the claim against the background of Homer and Herodotus. We also understood it against the self-made background of Thucydides's emphasis on preparation and capital. What εἰωθυῖαν adds to *axiosis*, through the notion of custom/habit (the word is related to *ethos*), is precisely the lack of control by individual wills, and it thus specifically conveys the loss of an extralegal and even extralinguistic sense of propriety that acted to reinforce itself beyond the intentions of any of the actors. One can make *ethos* appeals, and they may indeed be the "strongest,"²⁷³ but part of their power is precisely that they are not under the complete control of the speaker, like Polyxena's character in the *Hecuba*.²⁷⁴

There is a doubleness to the analysis here. This *deinon* expansion and contraction of civic life is a fact about the world, an insight into history and political science, and a feature of Thucydides's text itself, which is the medium in which the expansion is inscribed. This is an example of how the careful shedding of philosophical preconceptions in order to see the disclosive power of Thucydides's text allows for the revelation of more and deeper insights into history and political science. One could go much further along these lines. For instance, in Aristotle, *epieikeia* is not just a value with a complex relationship to justice generally, but also to democracy specifically, since to be a man of *epieikeia* is also a way of saying that a certain man is of "the better sort."²⁷⁵ Thus, insofar as *epieikeia* is naming a crucial and self-reinforcing normative structure that was important to Athens, there is a question as to whether it was always doomed because it is inherently the province of the few or whether, to the contrary, democracy can only thrive when there is an elite, as arguably there must always be, and this elite has a norm like *epieikeia*.

Thucydides makes this question even more interesting because of the Athenians' collective association with *epieikeia* as an empire, which suggests an important connection between the viability of the democracy at home and maintaining an empire abroad. This is perhaps what Cleon and Diodotus, contrary to Pericles, do not understand, namely, that democracy is compatible with empire because it allows the whole polis to practice the *epieikeia* the demos expects and admires of its elite, another crucial isomorphism.²⁷⁶ Thus, in their common disavowal of *epieikeia*, Cleon and Diodotus are perhaps abandoning the cultural norm that allowed the Athenians to see the *deinon* and yet dare within it. Obviously, this point was not obvious, not even to Pericles, with his strident insistence on not

compromising, but it was there. This is, of course, an issue of the highest significance, and though honed by Thucydides, it is left open for us to grapple with.

The Athenians are, like Oedipus, a paradigm of the human, and not just another polis, and so it is the Athenians, as a group, who, in three notable instances, are described as “making themselves *deinon*.”²⁷⁷ In these three passages the gist is that the Athenians have worked themselves up, and in all three cases they have done so with disastrous consequences. The first instance involves Athenian anger about being dismissed by the Spartans in 462–1 B.C. when they send a large force to help the Spartans with the revolt of the helots at Ithome. The Spartans are alarmed by the Athenians’ daring (*tolma*) and innovativeness, concerns that echo, of course, what the Corinthians will later tell the Spartans they (the Spartans) do *not* know about the Athenians;²⁷⁸ the Spartans seem to know well enough and decide to send the Athenians home. Over this unworthy (form of *axioō*) treatment, the Athenians make themselves *deinon*, and this is the first break between the Athenians and the Spartans.²⁷⁹ Indeed, the Athenians *immediately* cancel their alliance with Sparta and make an alliance with Argos. This kind of story should be familiar. The Spartans, accurately recognizing who the Athenians are and trying to use foresight, act so that these very traits of the Athenians are indeed used against them, as feared. Meanwhile, the Athenians, by making themselves *deinon* over this slight rather than acting with *epieikeia*, act, and quickly, to begin the cycle that will lead to their eventual downfall. The Athenians behave similarly in Book Five in connection with perceived Spartan treaty violations.²⁸⁰ Again, this was (perhaps) the time to act with *epieikeia*; instead, we get the introduction of Alcibiades and another round of alliance making with Argos.²⁸¹

And, in their most disastrous bout of making themselves *deinon*, Thucydides goes to great lengths to elucidate what the Athenians did not do; they did not *see* clearly. Here is the passage:

The Athenian demos was pleased, having grasped, so they believed, a clarity, and *deinon* having made themselves already that they could not discover who was plotting against the many.²⁸²

This translation is arguably a little more awkward than it needs to be, but there certainly was no grammatical necessity that *deinon* be joined to clarity by an “and,” as it is in the text. We are back to the incident of the desecration of the Herms, the event that leads to Alcibiades’s recall and that, as we have seen, reminds the people of the inaccurate story of

Harmodius and Aristogeiton; it is also in the context of this incident that Thucydides uses the phrase “a clarity” two more times.²⁸³ The Athenians are pleased to take the evidence of an informer, and it is this evidence that will lead to the disastrous recall of Alcibiades. In this passage, as in the other two, the Athenians have done more than upset themselves. They have put themselves in a state where they will exacerbate the very thing that has made them upset even as they believe they are attending to the problem. In fact, they have put themselves in great danger. Finally, this danger could have been averted if they had only exercised *epieikeia* or, what amounts to the same thing, saw who they were, namely, the kin of Ajax.

Returning to Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, it is notable that the man of *epieikeia* does not just accept less than his due, but also has the ability to see the whole, including the whole through time. Relating *epieikeia* to *sophia* or *phronesis* is beyond our scope, and Thucydides is not interested in making these subtle distinctions. What we have seen is that Thucydides is interested in presenting a clarity for those, unlike the Athenians at the time of the launching of the Sicilian Expedition, who wish to see clearly, that such vision is a precondition for exercising *epieikeia*, and that it is *epieikeia* that, to a large extent, has the ability to save the polis and the community of poleis from the vicious cycles of the *deinon*. This is, of course, a rather murky saving method. It is not elegant, and it cannot be achieved through right thinking alone. Plato, as we will see, would search for another way.

Athenian confusion as to the *deinon* and inability to exercise *epieikeia* are on display in the explicitly tragic Melian Dialogue, the foreboding prelude to the Sicilian Expedition. The Athenians tell the Melians that they are in danger of suffering the most *deimon* fate and that *hesuchia*, that is, peace, neutrality, is not an option for them.²⁸⁴ In this the Athenians are demonstrating the worst fears of their enemies, and when the Melians question the *epieikeia* of the discussion that the Athenians would like to conduct, the Athenians do not even answer;²⁸⁵ at least not explicitly. The implicit and very painful answer comes when the Athenians say that they are more endangered by the islands that are not yet part of their empire than by the inhabitants of the mainland (i.e., the Spartans and their allies).²⁸⁶

This answer brings us all the way back to Homer, to how *logos* can be true in more than one way at once, especially upon rereading, that is, in time. Unconquered islands, namely, Sicily, will indeed be much more

deinon to the Athenians than unconquered land powers. It is also true that, as a matter of imperial policy, the Athenians do rely on the islands in the Aegean to support the fleet that enslaves them and that not allowing for exceptions is a sensible policy. And there is also an element of bloody-mindedness on the part of the Melians,²⁸⁷ and we should not forget, this dialogue notwithstanding, the significant evidence of real Athenian *epieikeia* in the running of their empire. But the different levels on which the text here is operating do not rely on one level being superior; there are no rigid laws of history beneath the surface, only more illuminating connections.

A final note on Sicily. It is well known that the Syracusan Expedition is deliberately conjoined with the Melian Dialogue and that the destruction of the Athenian Expedition is full of Homeric and tragic resonances. There are two additional factors that Thucydides emphasizes and that are worth noting here. One is Athenian ignorance, and the other is the extent to which Syracuse resembles Athens. The Athenians do not know who they are, and because of this they sail off to fight themselves. If they had trusted in themselves (i.e., Alcibiades) or generally behaved more like who they are (i.e., if they had been more aggressive), they might at least have avoided annihilation and might well have won. As with Pentheus, their lack of self-knowledge doomed them to be struck down by their own reflection. Just as the Athenians have “gone nautical” because of the invading Persians,²⁸⁸ they have forced the Syracusans to go nautical.²⁸⁹ Hence the special poignancy of the unique form of the word “mimesis,” “anti-mimesis,” found only in Thucydides, of Athenians imitating the regressive naval tactics of the Syracusans.²⁹⁰ This word captures what has doomed the Athenians, even as it also intimates that, in the end, the Athenians never did quite meet their match; they did not lose a battle on the open sea, but lost because they had to fight a land battle in a harbor. There is a resemblance, not an identity, between the Syracusans and Athenians and hence also no simple reversal, but a *deinon* counterturning.

To the extent that I am insisting on the primacy of a special sort of vision into which Thucydides explicitly tries to initiate his readers, I am not suggesting that he has no interest in action. Rather, achieving this vision is the precondition for effective action, and this vision cannot be achieved simply by providing a handbook of speeches and stratagems. Thucydides, as usual, is preparing us to live up to Pericles’s charge – to act when seeing the *deinon* most clearly.

Plato

We should not end our discussion without making reference to the extraordinary treatment that the word *deinon* receives in Plato's *Protagoras*. On the one hand, this treatment is an endorsement of the analysis just offered because the Platonic Socrates, no fan of tragedy or history, much less rhetoric, implicitly recognizes that the intense multivocality of this word is of philosophical interest. Yet I think further that the context of the dialogue demonstrates the extent to which the battle over words, especially words like *deinon*, defines who we are.

The *Protagoras* is ostensibly about whether virtue can be taught, about the clash between philosophy and rhetoric. The larger impact of the dialogue is another matter. Here is Carson:

The *Protagoras* is a dialogue intent on mixing up certain of the distinctions that enlightened gentlemen like you and I value most highly. It asks us to consider and to confuse the difference between a philosopher and a sophist, the distinction between poetry and prose, the quality that separates real imitation from imitation imitation, the definition of words. It forces us to confront the dirt, impasse, and absurdity that result when boundaries are lost and categories mix and voices are misappropriated.²⁹¹

The centerpiece of the dialogue is the interpretation of a poem by Simonides in which he (Simonides) objects to a saying of another (Pitacus) concerning virtue.²⁹² Amid the tortured chain of interpretation that ensues, the question arises: how should one interpret the word *chalepos*? Does this word mean "hard" as in "difficult" or "hard" as in "bad?"²⁹³

In explicating *chalepos*, Socrates turns to the word *deinon* and yet another interlocutor, the Sophist Prodicus. Apparently, Prodicus consistently chides Socrates whenever he speaks of a person (such as Protagoras) as "*deinos* and *sophos*," or of "*deinon* wealth," "*deinon* peace," or "*deinon* health." This is because *deinon* means "bad" and should be reserved for phrases like "*deinon* disease," "*deinon* war," and "*deinon* poverty." It is hard to know what to do with this odd exchange. Plato himself does not use *deinon* to mean "bad"; moreover, in just a moment, Socrates will insist that *chalepos* does not mean "bad" either. Socrates will thus ultimately agree with one Sophist (Protagoras) against another, namely, Prodicus, whose dialect is apparently being ridiculed²⁹⁴ and seems to have no tolerance for ambiguity. As Carson puts it:

[...] you can always tell the sophist from the philosopher in a Platonic dialogue. The sophist is the one who loses his sense of humor.²⁹⁵

So, maintaining good cheer amid the ambiguities of the *deinon*, as well as all other words, is the mark of the *philosopher*! But it must be added that of all words that could have been used as an exemplar, the word used to demonstrate all that is lost through unimaginative and reductive translation is *deinon*. Moreover, this dialogue ends with Socrates accepting that his position has become so enmeshed with that of Protagoras that it is not clear who believes what.²⁹⁶ The more explicit the violent counterturnings of the human, the more pressing is the question of the *deinon*, even in Plato, at least in passing.

Conclusion

The self-exceeding chains of logoi that are *deinoi* dramatized in a tragedy end at the edge of the tragic stage and festival. A play must end. Moreover, in the genre of tragedy, the dramas are dissociated from the polis that sponsored these plays and from the time at which they are being staged. This is not to claim that the plays do not gesture to their contemporary world (and to ours); it is merely to acknowledge that the genre mandates limits to this gesturing. Referential chains can be only so long and complex if they are to be part of a live performance, especially given the other conventions of the genre (e.g., the staging of the great old stories). We have already seen that in Thucydides the *deinon* becomes a central question for the polis that stages tragedies and that it does so right now. History does not end, nor does it take a holiday. Furthermore, in Thucydides the medium of writing (as practiced by Thucydides) allows a far denser interweaving of referential chains.

Deinon is ultimately both a word for that which is worthy of dread and a word for the situation in which the dreadful is a question, that is, the human situation. We have followed one interesting referential chain through time and space, a method itself disclosed by Thucydides, and we have tried to consider what one word refers to given that it must relate to its past even while it is not bound to it. And yet, there is a sense in which this word is itself the name for this very movement, that *deinon* names itself. What does this mean? *Deinon*, as the word for that which constantly exceeds itself because of the uncanny nature of its power and the adjective for the tragic condition, the human condition, is also the word for the way logos, the essential activity of the human, works within Thucydides (and tragedy). The very possibility of such reflectivity is itself *deinon*. Thus, we have observed that in Thucydides considering what is truly dreadful has exceeded the tragic stage and is a matter of urgent concern to the polis.

This movement is *deinon*. Yet we have also seen how considering *deinon* in terms of perception, power, strangeness, and boundaries goes all the way back to Homer, that only small steps have been taken. And so it seems that all words function like *deinon*, namely, through self-exceeding and self-concealing chains that are properly labeled *deinon*. This is the sort of dangerous multiplication that Electra has warned us to expect.

Thucydidean Temporality

Introduction

It has now been demonstrated that Thucydides's text shares many features with tragedy and that a key feature that is shared also explains why tragedy is not just one genre among many from which Thucydides draws. Rather, the *deinon*, as demonstrated in tragedy, is precisely that feature of the world that demands to expand beyond the tragic stage and into the world of the polis, just as Hegel's interpretation of the essence of tragedy suggested that it must. The functioning of the *deinon* in Thucydides also justifies our appeal to tragic temporality as structuring the world that Thucydides discloses. We have seen some examples of this tragic temporality, as in the plight of the Thebans at Plataea or of the Athenians in connection with the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. In this chapter we will develop other examples and deepen what is meant by tragic temporality. Tragic temporality is the answer to the question of why Thucydides's text founds a world rather than merely discloses one. This is to say that we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2 that Thucydides self-consciously discloses a world, and Chapter 3 justifies our description of this world as "tragic." Yet returning to the Introduction, our task is to explain the extraordinary success of this text in founding a world.

It is standard to claim that Thucydides's continued celebrity has to do with the "timelessness" of his work,¹ and one often hears similar comments about tragedies, like *Oedipus Rex*. But both works are actually specific to their time, containing a host of specific cultural norms and references. My claim is not that they are timeless, but that the details into which they delve perform a temporality that is our own. These works

are not “time-less,” but “time-full.” Thucydides does not just disclose a world; rather, despite (and indeed because of) its intense idiosyncrasies, he discloses our world.

In this final round of deepening our understanding of Thucydides’s accomplishment, we will discuss some of the most and least famous passages from his text. We will begin with the most famous, the most supposedly timeless, Pericles’s Funeral Oration, in order to recover its organizing temporality. We will also discuss some of the dry and little-discussed narrative portions of Books Five and Eight as also demonstrating tragic temporality, perhaps even more strikingly than the Funeral Oration.

Along the way, we will again broaden our focus. As Thucydides himself would point out, tragic temporality will never be properly elucidated unless placed in dynamic contrast with something else. There is an especially important, though little-studied, counterpart to the Thucydidean Funeral Oration, and that is the one provided by Plato, through Socrates, in the *Menexenus*. It is through reading Thucydides along with Plato that an illuminating contrast will be provided. The contrast with Plato is not coincidental, as this is a distinction that many philosophers, particularly Nietzsche, have indicated was fundamental, though without elaborate argument. With the help of Heraclitus, we will be able to articulate the philosophical issues at stake here. For Plato, or better, for a Platonist, the tragic temporality that animates Thucydides’s world and founds history is not fundamental, nor is it to be embraced. Indeed, the very possibility of the world disclosure achieved by Thucydides is a challenge to Platonism and to a large part of the philosophical tradition, which is one important reason that this accomplishment of Thucydides has been obscured.

The Metaphysics of Praise – Pericles and Socrates on Athens

When we first discussed the Funeral Oration in Chapter 2, we noted how absolutely central this speech is: the extent to which it does not obviously advance or explain events, how it could not have been an important event at the time, how it distinguishes itself from other examples of the genre through its generality, how significant it is that it is delivered by Pericles right before the onset of the Plague. As for the speech itself, we focused on Pericles’s extraordinary appeal to the power of eros, his claims about the Athenian way of life (e.g., the tolerance and openness), and the kinds of memorials the school of Greece was establishing for all time (*deinon* memorials!). All of these appeals, it turned out, had a surprising, indeed *deinon*, future and past history in the text.

Our focus now will be on the temporality of the Funeral Oration, and for this we will need to make a few more points about the genre. Following Loraux, the funeral oration as a genre has “always already” praised Athens.² No other city has such a *nomos* to honor its dead; it is even a *topos* of funeral orations to praise this very special *nomos*. And so, part of the praising is performed through the very act of praising. This I take to be the key point that Carter makes in connecting *epitaphios* and ritual.³ It is easy to mock funeral orations generally as long-winded and repetitive, but this is to miss their point. This *nomos* provides Athens and Athenians with a place in the *kosmos*. In fact, it is through this *nomos* that the polis conquers the unconquerable, namely, death. Athens is the city worth dying for because it is the city that honors its dead (together and with logos). One can notice all this before even breaking down the individual *topoi* typical of funeral orations. For instance, the *topos* of autochthony clearly gives Athens a place (indeed, a very privileged place) in the *kosmos*.

Given its roles in establishing self-identity and the centrality of the figure of Pericles, it is very odd that history plays no role in the Thucydidean Funeral Oration. How appropriate would it have been for Pericles to urge the Athenians to love their polis through knowing its past, through comprehending this past? History, as (at least) a summary of Athenian accomplishments both mythical and real, is in fact a standard *topos* in all other extant *epitaphioi* (as well as in many forensic cases). In fact, Thucydides mentions many of these historical events in the *Archaeology*, and so do the Athenians in Sparta. Why is there no history in the Funeral Oration? There are some easy answers, which, though not wrong, are inadequate. First, Aristotle tells us that epideictic rhetoric deals with the present versus the past, which is the domain of forensic rhetoric, and versus the future, which is the purview of deliberative rhetoric.⁴ But Aristotle’s claim in the *Rhetoric* is both prescriptive and reductive. As mentioned before, it is not true of any extant funeral oration (most notably that written by Plato, in the *Menexenus*, which we will return to shortly).

Second, it could be argued that there was no reason to repeat claims about the Persian Wars yet again because so many of the claims about Athens’s past are mentioned (even repeated) elsewhere, and the *Pentecontaetia* is arguably the most striking account of Athenian dynamism imaginable. Indeed, such unwillingness to repeat is exactly the tendency one would expect to find in a *written* work. Nevertheless, many of the Periclean claims about the Athens of the present are also repetitive; Pericles espouses many of the same descriptions of the Athenians as the

Corinthians (as well as what he himself said in his earlier speech). Most decisively, as we have already seen, with each seeming repetition there is much to be learned. After all, as is well known, Pericles turns many of the earlier negative descriptions of Athens to reflect the glory of Athens. For instance, Archidamus's claim that the Athenians are weaker because they do not have the rigorous training characteristic of the Spartans is turned upside down by Pericles, who insists that the Athenians do not train constantly because they do not need to.⁵ This is, of course, also an instance of Pericles showing an Alcibiades-like facility with facts.

To understand the absence of history from the Funeral Oration, we must again listen to what Pericles does say. Pericles's Funeral Oration is extraordinary in the depth of its institutional analysis (which is obviously connected with the speech's jarring generality). This is to say that praise of Athenian democracy and education is common, but not to the length and in the manner that Pericles pursues it. For instance, Pericles argues for the following points and often provides supporting arguments.⁶

1. Not striving after, or imitating (a form of mimesis), the *nomoi* of others, indeed being a paradigm, is an end in itself.⁷
2. Law in Athens is obeyed out of fear and shame.⁸
3. Athenian life is characterized by games, by enjoying the products of the whole world, and by art.⁹
4. Ultimately, the Athenian way of life, in all of its blinding originality, is forcing *logos* itself to change, all without the aid of the poets.¹⁰

All of these arguments are profound when given, and only become more so as the *History* unfolds (consider the implications of the Athenians imitating the Syracusans), which further demonstrates the worldliness of the text, but it is the last argument that I would like to emphasize in connection with the unusual temporality of this oration. In typical Thucydidean style, Pericles forces together claims and attributes that do not obviously sit well together: fear and shame (despite Pericles's later critique of fear), law-abidingness and supralegal courtesy (e.g., of unwritten laws), love of beauty and toughness, and, as noted previously, happiness, freedom, and courage.¹¹

Such violent equating is what *logos* can and must do. But not all poleis put this power at the service of their dead and, by extension, their own imperial ambitions.¹² And no polis has ever glorified *logos* to the extent that Athens has. *Logos* is glorified through using its power as no one had done before. Pericles is appropriately described as *dunatotatos* (most powerful) in his use of *logos*.¹³ He understands that the Athenians have

violently created a lasting memory of themselves throughout the world on account of their daring (*tolma*)¹⁴ – as the Melians could attest. Of course, the Melians make explicit mention of the complex memory of Brasidas.

There is no history in Pericles's Funeral Oration because there is no greater praise of Athens than in this self-praising mastery of logos, and there is also no greater means of expressing the deepest functioning of the Athenian Empire than through performing the power of logos. Other orators may decide that Athens's greatest glory can be achieved through linking Athens with its past,¹⁵ while others may go beyond this to other special effects, such as Demosthenes and his list of the *phylai* (tribes)¹⁶ and Hyperides's visit to Hades.¹⁷ However, the example of Pericles argues otherwise; if one is to praise Athens as Athens, then one must dwell with logos as logos. It could be objected that the dense and paradoxical style of Pericles (i.e., of Thucydides) makes this speech actually undeliverable. But this is not really an objection. Given the contemporary Athenian passion for Gorgias (not to mention Aeschylus), I do not wish to speculate on what style of speech could or could not be delivered. Suffice it to say that this is how Athens is most praised in Thucydides's *History*. To the degree that this highest praise, which had no need for history, did require the context of Thucydides's medium, namely, written history, we have a name for this possibility: *deinon*.

Carter connects the genre of funeral orations to "primordial time," but it is not clear what this means.¹⁸ In trying to elucidate this notion, I will instead refer to "tragic temporality." The word "primordial" makes primordial time sound like the time in which the dinosaurs lived, and "time" sounds too pedestrian—"tragic time" sounds like the time to watch a tragedy. I do not want to introduce the issue of tragic temporality as if it were a new question, one raised only by Pericles's Funeral Oration. Rather, we have now earned an understanding of time as that which is articulated by the *deinon* counterturnings of the human. Oedipus is a paradigm, and so is his unusual relationship to time. Oedipus's past is his future, even as his future changes his past. In a similar way, we have seen how the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is a story about Athens's past that not only foreshadows its future but plays a role in this future, even as the Athenian future is changing what supposedly was known about the past. Yet the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is a somewhat obvious example of tragic temporality at work in history. Pericles's Funeral Oration, in its abstract institutional analysis, and most especially in its use of the power of logos to consider and praise the implications of being

the empire of logos, also performs tragic temporality. If this is so, then we have gone a long way toward demonstrating how Thucydides extends the tragic mechanism into the polis.

Yet how does institutional analysis, often signaled and facilitated by abstract vocabulary and difficult syntax, relate to tragic temporality? Let us consider the issue of law. One can write histories of human engagements with the law that stretch backward and forward in time. One can even view oneself through one's engagement with law. The issue of lawfulness transcends the time of my life, even my culture and my state. Law also contributes to articulating the particular time I live in even in very pedestrian ways. And so I can say: "after this law was passed, I changed jobs." This is just a sketch, but the claim is that tragic temporality is constituted by engagement with the convoluted issues that have no particular place in the ordinary successive time delineated by the ticking of a clock. Convoluted because law must always exist at a particular ordinary time (say, August 2004), but the law is itself partially responsible for the creation of such time (e.g., through calendar legislation), indeed for the very lawfulness that makes law itself possible. As Hume famously argues, there is no obvious priority between lawfulness in general and obedience to particular laws.¹⁹ We obey a law because we want to be lawful, but there is also a law that we are to be lawful.²⁰

That at the heart of our world is a groundless self-referential structure, namely, logos, is *deinon*. What tragedy and Thucydides generally dramatize is the unraveling of this structure, but this is not how it has to be. *Deinon* cycles also create human civilization; this is the message of the Ode to Man, as well as of Thucydides's Archaeology and Pericles's Funeral Oration, and Thucydides's account of the cyclical descent into *stasis*, which may have been averted in so many ways and at so many moments if *epieikeia* had only been practiced. The Athenians struggle to be who they are, for instance a polis notable for its *epieikeia*, given whom they have been and given what they do, will affect who they will have been, and this is the self-enveloping *deinon* movement that is tragic temporality.

All extant funeral orations deal with issues of government, education, and self-image that cross temporal boundaries. The speeches themselves demonstrate this because from 431 B.C. (the height of Athenian power) to 322 B.C. (the eve of its end), the themes are the same, though the specifics are, crucially, different. We have already seen that Pericles's Funeral Oration engages with such issues insistently and incisively. The example of law was not coincidental. Why does one – anyone – obey the law – ever?

A law mandating lawfulness is not a solution. Pericles appeals to fear and shame. Fear almost certainly has a natural and cultural component, while shame would seem to be wholly cultural and is in fact a defining characteristic of Greek culture in contrast to our own, which is certainly shameless. Oliver Wendell Holmes's "bad man" is not moved by shame. Pericles's answer is thus noncircular and, though general, also refers to the situation on the ground. In short, it is a good answer. The connection between fear and shame, *epieikeia*, and Pericles's seemingly revolutionary and alternative espousal of political eros, cannot be addressed here. Our focus is instead on just how inescapable and profound this issue is. Thucydides did not create a narrative dense with ubiquitous superficialities about Athens, but with questions that can never be answered, but must always be posed, and are affected by the posing.²¹ This is why the text does not just disclose a world but founds one.

As noted previously, Loraux labels such an incisive engagement with fundamental human problems "timeless." Presumably this is because such insights are always relevant. Nevertheless, it is more accurate to describe such engagements as "time-full" for precisely the reason that the issues with which humans are constantly engaging are always temporal in this way. Of course, if time is taken simply as clock/calendar time (e.g., 431 B.C. versus 322 B.C.), then Pericles's Funeral Oration is without time. But if time is taken as tragic, then the more the Funeral Oration transcends ordinary time, the more it is anchored in tragic temporality.

There is another text that directly engages with the figure of Pericles and the question of how to praise Athens, a text by another revolutionary and world-disclosive prose author, and one that features another funeral oration seemingly clearly not meant to be given – Plato's *Menexenus*. No one quite knows what to do with the *Menexenus*, but perhaps we are now in a position to explicate this text on its own terms, as well as to use the explication to sharpen the argument about Thucydides.

Plato's *Menexenus*

The *Menexenus* begins with an irreverent introduction that borders on slapstick;²² Socrates then delivers a funeral oration that he claims is composed of the leftovers of the speech written for Pericles by his mistress, Aspasia. The speech details events that occurred long after the deaths not only of Pericles and Aspasia, but also of Socrates himself. Moreover, the speech alternates between painful praise of Athens, such as that the Athenians won the Peloponnesian War,²³ and passages that

seem not only sincere but truly Platonic, such as the moving address to the sons and parents of the dead.²⁴ Many scholars have seen the speech as a companion to the *Gorgias* because it appears to be an obvious parody of rhetorical practice. Yet Cicero tells us that in *his* day the speech was actually performed seriously;²⁵ Carter explains this by noting that Plato could only parody funeral orations by exaggerating their real, and really effective, *topoi*.²⁶ Over the centuries, Plato's excessiveness was lost and the speech was simply taken as an exemplar (a *deinon* possibility inherent in the functioning of logos).

There is no point trying to uncover the one true motive of the *Menexenus*. That the work is heavy with irony is obvious. To the extent that it is not clear where exactly this irony is only demonstrates the dangerous nature of irony (and of logos, which makes irony possible). Irony requires an in-group, but it may fail to create such a group or the group may in time disappear. And so, it is not clear which of Plato's words are a sly attack on rhetoric in general, which are an attack on the Athenian polis, which are an attack on contemporary Athenian policy, and which are a sincere attempt to praise and comfort and thus perhaps provide a model of how rhetoric should be used. And so, as Socrates warns in the *Phaedrus*, the written text does not know whom to address and is left to wander on its own.²⁷

Another area of ambiguity is the relation of the funeral oration of the *Menexeuns* to that delivered by Pericles in Thucydides's *History*. Kahn believes that there can be no question that Plato's text responds to Thucydides and does so antagonistically.²⁸ He bases this on a number of stylistic parallels, the presumed sensation caused by Thucydides's text, and Plato's references to Aspasia and to Antiphon. I do not consider these arguments decisive, though I do think they are suggestive. Only suggestive because all extant funeral orations demonstrate almost the same *topoi*,²⁹ and Pericles is a favorite target of Plato throughout his corpus.³⁰ The reference to Thucydides through Antiphon is extremely subtle, especially since such a prominent figure could be presumed to have had many students other than Thucydides, and the tradition that Thucydides was a student of Antiphon is itself hardly firm. As for the best-seller nature of Thucydides's text, it would have been extraordinary if Plato had not had some contact with it. But that is as far as we can go. Who can say how widely the text was available, whether Plato read it carefully, or to what extent Thucydides's Funeral Oration of Pericles or other excerpts were already celebrated?³¹ Surely there were a large number of funeral orations in circulation, presumably including at least two attributed to Pericles. And

so, in the end, one cannot claim that Plato is offering a specifically anti-Thucydidean position on Athens and the Athenian Empire. However, it is worth noting that on Kahn's reading Plato remains a hellenophilic imperialist. Like Isocrates, another one of his rivals, he wants the Greeks to unite against the barbarians.³² The draw of contemporary political affairs, on this reading, is too strong to resist, even for Plato.

Though it cannot be taken as an explicit counter, Plato's *Menexenus* does provide an important contrast. First and foremost, unlike Pericles's Funeral Oration, Plato goes into considerable detail in discussing Athenian mythological history, but into no detail at all with respect to contemporary Athenian institutions. On Carter's able reading, such references to the past are an effective part of the genre because they anchor the present in the past, and thus such references ought not be dismissed out of hand as mere parody. I also agree with Kahn that the anachronism of many of these passages should not be a major concern (historical accuracy is stretched in all extant *epitaphioi*). It may even be true that some manner of contemporary political commentary is buried in the more jarring anachronisms. But what I wish to emphasize about Platonic history in this speech is its superficiality. It does not matter that Socrates offers different accounts of Pylos and Sicily,³³ but that he offers no real analysis. The same goes for the sections on education and lawfulness.³⁴

The issue of law is particularly revealing. We saw Pericles struggling to articulate a theory of lawfulness. Socrates bases law on his elaboration of the standard claims of autochthony; the Athenians respect one another because they are all descended from the same mother. Even Athenian *stasis* is less severe because of this.³⁵ The Athenian Empire itself is based on racial purity. The pure Athenians cannot accept any barbarian encroachment. Here it is especially tempting to emphasize the parodic intent of the text (especially noticeable in comparison to the depth of Plato's analysis elsewhere, such as in the *Laws* or the *Crito*), but I do not wish to go in this direction. Rather, I want to draw attention to the relative poverty of the account of law in the *Menexenus* compared to that offered by Pericles in the Funeral Oration. There is a hint of a more full-blooded take on the social in general late in the speech when Socrates, appropriating the voice of the dead, urges the surviving sons to achieve virtue (*arete*) above all.³⁶ This passage is generally taken as sincere because of its similarity to other claims in Platonic texts. But notice that such values are personal, internal. Socrates is taking the exact opposite position here to that of Pericles in his third speech; he is prioritizing the individual and the individual's ability to achieve happiness through a proper arrangement

of her life. Pericles externalizes traditional virtues (or, more accurately, basically allows the traditional virtues to remain external), while Socrates turns them inward.

And this points to the deeper contrast between Thucydides and Plato. When Pericles makes an appearance in the *Meno*, *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias*, it is as an example of a failed teacher. The failure to teach is taken as proof that Pericles never knew anything to begin with. Time has proven Pericles's ignorance because he has failed to teach even his own children. A large part of this failure is related to the subjects on which Pericles has concentrated his intelligence – for example, rhetoric. Such subjects are knacks, not knowledge, because they relate to the changing wants of the many. Pericles's focus on, indeed glorification of, external public activity – activities that are inherently dangerous and dependent on others – has barred the way to true wisdom. Nothing Pericles knows has been chained down.³⁷ Whatever is going on in the *Menexenus*, there is no espousal of engagement with the phenomena of an unstable world. There is certainly no deployment of logos as that which can secure Athens's eternal glory through its power. On the contrary, the *Menexenus* sets up an implicit contrast between the unstable world of the polis and a supremely un-Periclean private, and stable, value system.

In this regard, it is important to note that Plato, in the *Laws*, which certainly does represent some of his best thinking on law, seeks to render *epieikeia*, what we have identified as the public norm that saves the polis, permanently redundant through carefully deducing the economic, political, and legal structures of his second-best polis.³⁸ Most notably, Plato's polis will have no economic inequality to start with, nor will any be allowed to develop. There will also be a set of laws as all-encompassing as possible, and punishments, since they are for the good of the punished, will hardly merit leniency, especially since the citizens of this polis will be instructed in the majesty of the laws from childhood.³⁹ Indeed, one of the few places in which *epieikeia* might still be shown is toward the laws themselves, as they mechanically force men into marriages they do not want in order to preserve the mathematical perfection of the distribution of land. Instead of mediating between individuals in the community, particularly the powerful toward the less powerful, *epieikeia* is now to be cultivated in the ruled for their rulers.⁴⁰ With such a static system as the model, including such an awesome confidence in one's legislative ability at the moment of founding that all that is left to do is breed passivity in one's successors, it is easy to see why Pericles's political wisdom was merely a knack, and why relying on traditional *epieikeia*, eros, or shame

to bind the self-legislating, volatile citizens of Athens to their laws was a mere shadow of real political knowledge.

Whatever the relative merits of the polis of Plato's *Laws* and Pericles's Athens,⁴¹ it is Pericles's Funeral Oration and not that of Plato that contains always profound thoughts on political institutions. The additional power that Pericles wields in Thucydides is not only a result of his mastery of logos within the speech, but also a result of the complex reference structure made possible by the fact that this speech is a written artifact embedded in Thucydides's *History*. Plato's speech is different in that it is somehow meant to be an attack on the power of logos through logos itself, and however this attack was to work, time has blurred, perhaps even reversed, its operation.

Here is one more important example of the confusion that ensues from this ironic use of logos. Socrates calls Athens an "aristocracy with approval of the many."⁴² Is this just a joke, another subtle reference to Thucydides,⁴³ or an exhortation to the Athenians really to allow the best to rule?⁴⁴ No obvious answer suggests itself, but what is clear is that Socrates's account of the life of the polis is impoverished relative to that of Thucydides's Pericles. Pericles relates aesthetics, ethics, the law, commerce, and foreign policy in an overarching analysis of the Athenian way of life. Was this propaganda? Surely. Did it feed the Athenians what they wanted to think about themselves? Of course. Is such pandering inherently dangerous? Yes, but is there another way? If such a way is presented in the *Menexenus*, it has been lost in transmission.

Thucydides and Plato in the Philosophical Tradition

The decision to compare Thucydides and Plato was no coincidence. The comparison was compelled by striking similarities in achievement (world foundation), as well as the means of the achievement (writing) and the brute fact of the *Menexenus*. There is another reason for pursuing this comparison, and it relates to our task of placing the philosophical issues posed by Thucydides's world disclosure in a broader philosophical context. There is no lengthy treatment of Thucydides by a philosopher. That said, there are many near misses, including perhaps Plato in the *Menexenus*. Aristotle ignores Thucydides and history more generally, though many think he draws on him, and this studious avoidance is itself fascinating.⁴⁵ Hegel too, as we have seen, makes suggestive comments about Thucydides, even when he does not mention him explicitly.⁴⁶ More recently, Bernard Williams attempted to describe a metaphysical

alternative to Plato and Kant and, in this connection, he named Sophocles and Thucydides.⁴⁷

Along the lines suggested by Williams, there is one philosopher who attributes very great importance to Thucydides and in explicit contrast to Plato, and that is Nietzsche:

My recreation, my preference, my *cure* from all Platonism has always been *Thucydides*. Thucydides, and perhaps the *Principe* of Machiavelli, are related to me closely by their unconditional will not to deceive themselves and not to see *reason* in reality – not in ‘reason,’ still less in ‘morality’ For the deplorable embellishment of the Greeks with the colors of the ideal which the “classically educated” carries away with him into life as the reward of his grammar-school drilling there is no more radical cure than Thucydides. One must turn him over line by line and read his hidden thoughts as clearly as his words: there are few thinkers so rich in hidden thoughts. *Sophist culture*, by which I mean *realist culture*, attains in him its perfect expression – this invaluable movement in the midst of the morality-and-ideal swindle of the Socratic schools which was then breaking out everywhere. Greek philosophy as the *decadence* of the Greek instinct; Thucydides as the grand summation, the last manifestation of that stern, hard matter-of-factness instinctive to the older Hellenes. *Courage* in the face of reality ultimately distinguishes such natures as Thucydides and Plato: Plato is a coward in the face of reality – consequently he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has *himself* under control – consequently he retains control over things. . . . [Nietzsche’s ellipsies]⁴⁸

A detailed discussion of this passage requires that one examine much of the very difficult Nietzschean corpus, but there are a few crucial points that can be explicated fairly succinctly. First, Nietzsche’s analysis of Thucydides in many ways parallels the argument of this book to this point. Nietzsche recognizes that Thucydides’s text demands to be read closely and over and over: Kitto’s “to-and-fro manner,”⁴⁹ a method central not only to reading Nietzsche’s own text but also given explicit prominence as such.⁵⁰ Indeed, Nietzsche espouses patience as the way to hear and love a melody as what it is,⁵¹ and, like Thucydides, is keen to select for the right audience, namely, an audience of “free spirits.”⁵² As we will soon see, in their creation of riddling texts targeted at especially patient audiences, both Thucydides and Nietzsche are similar to Heraclitus. In carefully following such riddles back and forth, what a reader achieves is far more than simple information gathering, more than cognitive discipline, more than a tragic (as sad and ironic) experience, and more than a policy briefing. Nietzsche, of course, does not use the Heideggerian idiom of world disclosure, but this is what his claim about Thucydides as a cure for Platonism amounts to when considered in the context of his work.

Platonism for Nietzsche is far more and far less than the philosophy of Plato. It is far more insofar as the central and radical ideas articulated in the most famous works of the Platonic corpus triumphed to become the fundamental metaphysical position of the West, particularly through Christianity: "Christianity is Platonism for the masses."⁵³ Yet, as this famous line also demonstrates, Nietzsche is well aware of the greater complexity of Plato's own thought. This understanding is already manifest in the *Birth of Tragedy* and continues to be so manifested;⁵⁴ this is also true for Heidegger's relationship with Plato. Since we will be concerned with Thucydides as a cure for Platonism, we will return in a moment to just what Platonism is supposed to amount to. Yet, based on this passage and our reading of Thucydides so far, we can say that indeed there is no discussion of morality in the sense of private virtues (per Socrates in the *Menexenus*) in Thucydides or (contra Allison) any articulation of fixed concepts somehow underlying what is really going on. Relatedly, Nietzsche's claim here is that Thucydides is a metaphysical realist, not a political one. Those who believe that Thucydides the political realist is delving beneath events to uncover causal connections that must recur, say that the strong must rule what they can, are actually attributing to Thucydides a form of what Nietzsche would call Platonism.⁵⁵

Nietzsche's claim about the world-disclosive power of Thucydides's text actually exceeds the argument of this book to the extent that Nietzsche is arguing that a proper reading of Thucydides can change the world in which we moderns, or post-moderns, or what have you, are already living. Based on the arguments made here about the familiarity of the discourses upon which Thucydides draws, especially tragedy, and the extent to which tragic logic demanded to be demonstrated in the world of the polis, this book is making a more modest argument about Thucydides's world-disclosive power at a time in the past with echoes that continue to compel into the present. Nietzsche is arguing that, even now, long after the death of tragedy, and after millennia of Platonism, Thucydides can disclose a world more generally, and one radically different from that we have long believed ourselves to be living in.

We are not pursuing this more radical claim, but insisting upon the Thucydidean achievement of world foundation, even once, is already a strongly anti-Platonic claim. Arguably, there is an easy Platonic response to the success of Thucydides, namely, that it reflects the triumph of rhetoric, mere cookery. This argument is complicated by the great difficulty of Thucydides's text and its subject, but we have already

mustered many of the themes and dramatic structures that could be seen as appealing. Even the long, antithetical, laced sentences could be seen as appealing, just as Gorgias's tortured syntax was once all the rage. Yet the Gorgianic style faded, never to return. Thucydides's legacy, though not realized all at once, and often not at all well,⁵⁶ has only grown, taken up by cultures without tragedy and without Gorgias. The simplest explanation of this success is that Thucydides was not a great chef, but rather a great doctor. This is not to emphasize Thucydides's connection with the contemporary Hippocratic tradition, but rather his connection with reality, without scare quotes. It is the Thucydidean revelation of reality that cannot be accepted by the Platonist because it is a reality without the underlying ideals.

Interestingly, reflecting on this passage from Nietzsche on Thucydides, Heidegger claims that Nietzsche himself was not able to escape Platonism:

But Thucydides, the thinker of *history*, was not able to overcome the Platonism reigning at the basis of Nietzsche's thought. Because Nietzsche's philosophy is metaphysics, and all metaphysics is Platonism, at the end of metaphysics, Being must be thought as value; that is, it must be reckoned as a merely conditioned condition of beings.⁵⁷

The question here is whether Heidegger believes that Thucydides could be a cure for Platonism for someone other than Nietzsche, and the answer must be yes. Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche is that Nietzsche does not truly overcome Platonism. Through aiming at a revaluation of all values and insisting on the primacy of the will to power, Nietzsche only repeats the key Platonic move – namely, that the world itself, being, *is not*, but is rather always mediated by some valuation. By valuing power (versus the Good or God), Nietzsche may well be turning Plato upside down, but such an inversion leaves the fundamentals of Plato's metaphysics in place. In our original passage, Nietzsche is explicit in endorsing Thucydides because of his lack of *all* valuation, and so Heidegger is claiming that, despite this keen and correct insight, Nietzsche himself succumbed to Platonism and failed to engage directly with the world as it is. Heidegger does not instruct us, directly at least, on how Thucydides might otherwise provide a cure.

The riddle of how Thucydides founds a world is entangled with this philosophical debate because it is only on account of a powerful, correct, and non-Platonic Thucydidean insight into the structure of the world that he succeeds in founding a world rather than merely disclosing one. In other words, Thucydides founds a world because the harsh reductionism

of his method reveals essential features of our world as it is, though these true features are not mechanical laws of history, nor can they generally be explained by any logical superstructure.

As noted previously, it is probably overreaching to claim that Plato responded to Thucydides directly, and so in developing the philosophical debate here, we cannot turn to a Platonic critique of Thucydides. Rather, as with Aristotle, it seems that his disdain was best expressed by his lack of interest in what was essentially only a novel way of describing ephemera. Yet there is a riddling thinker of war and the polis that Plato (and Aristotle) definitely do engage with: Heraclitus. For Nietzsche, “the world forever needs the truth, hence the world forever needs Heraclitus,”⁵⁸ and both Hegel and Heidegger are only slightly less effusive, though they also analyze Heraclitus’s limitations. All three thinkers defend Heraclitus from the criticism of Aristotle.⁵⁹ Of particular interest here is the ancient suggestion (by Diodotus), discussed by Gadamer, that Heraclitus’s teachings were “political,” that is, relate to *politeia*, to such an extent that Heraclitus’s discussions of natural phenomena were meant to illustrate his thinking about the polis.⁶⁰ There is nothing in the extant fragments (there are about 100) that is obviously political, but do Heraclitus’s distinctive metaphysical arguments about war and logos not have political repercussions?

In using the term “political,” I am not suggesting that the polis was political in the conventional modern sense. Following Heidegger, the polis itself was not “political.”⁶¹ The polis is the place where humans lived, and it is a space constantly under threat from within and without. The polis, the place for humans, was thus not only questionable, but most questionable. Heidegger contrasts this with the modern notion of the political as something ubiquitous and with the state as an institution whose existence is not questioned.⁶² As it is the site in which we always already find ourselves, any metaphysical position must have implications for the polis. Plato himself elaborated on the political implications of his metaphysics; as noted previously, one conclusion he arrived at was that in a well-organized polis *epieikeia* in its traditional sense would be unnecessary. Our question is whether we can find a means to recover the political implications of Heraclitean thought.⁶³ If Thucydides elucidates such implications, then exploring the connection between Heraclitus and Thucydides further deepens what is at stake between Thucydides and Platonism.

There are textual parallels between Thucydides and Heraclitus.⁶⁴ Like Heraclitus, Thucydides has contempt for the multitude and their

preferred means of “information gathering” (i.e., poets, logographers),⁶⁵ even though, as we have seen, Thucydides relies on these sources in a complicated manner. Heraclitus has a similarly complex relationship with the tradition he must both appeal to and criticize.⁶⁶ Moreover, Thucydides, like Heraclitus, is fond of the use of signs.⁶⁷ Both thinkers make frequent use of neologisms and near-impossible grammatical constructions, and these constructions are recognized as part of their respective arguments about the nature of the multitude and of logos.⁶⁸ Finally, there is the extent to which both authors are absorbed in the emerging world of currency. We have already touched upon Thucydides’s distinctive analysis of the connection between empire and coinage, currency and logos. Richard Seaford has recently made the argument that Heraclitus’s own metaphysics relies on the metaphors made available by currency, most notably the argument that logos is both the means and end of the world, just as currency is both the means and the end of economic transactions.⁶⁹ This is to say that we both do business *in* money and do business *for* money. The parallel between currency, as analyzed by Seaford, and the *deinon* functioning of logos should be clear: what is ostensibly our creation, and created for our benefit, also functions, essentially, beyond our control as both a provider and spoiler of our end(s).⁷⁰

Heraclitus

But what did Heraclitus teach? Heraclitus is famous for writing in riddling aphorisms. We could call his writing performative insofar as the form of his riddles seems to demonstrate their content; for example, *as* riddles, they cannot be understood by the very multitude Heraclitus so often denigrates within the aphorism. Thus, to the extent that Heraclitus’s corpus requires rereading, time is implicated in the process of knowing. And it is as a thinker of time and logos that Heraclitus can contribute most to understanding the distinction between Thucydides and Plato. Consider the following famous passage:

The ruler whose oracle is at Delphi neither discloses [*legein*] nor conceals [*kruptein*], but offers signs.⁷¹

There are arguments on both sides of the question of whether Heraclitus’s offering of signs is to be associated with that of Apollo, whose riddling self-fulfilling prophecies we have seen structure so much of tragedy. I tend to think that it is, but this is not the decisive point here. Whatever its relation to Heraclitus’s art in general, as Kahn argues, fragment 93 *performs* its

point.⁷² The passage is itself a sign about signs, and such self-referentiality presupposes rereading. In this way, a very particular (and now familiar) temporality is built into the meaning of the riddles. Here is another example:

Uncomprehending having heard, they are like the deaf. The Saying bears witness to them “the present absent.”⁷³

Which saying is the one “bearing witness”? Is it the one cited within the passage, which is riddling enough, or this whole passage? We don’t and couldn’t know. This ambiguity is grounded not only in the relation of whole to part or the indefinite reference, but on the essential openness of the whole. After all, *logos* can conjoin presence and absence, but is this Saying really sensible?

It would be one thing if Heraclitus wrote in ostensibly clear prose, because this would raise the question of whether *any* text can foreclose such reinterpretations, but this is not the claim here (although I am sympathetic to it). Heraclitus’s fragments, unlike perhaps the *Phaedrus*, are not desperately trying to break through the limits of their medium to secure their proper interpretation. On the contrary, these eminently citable, ambiguous, and self-sufficient sayings appear comfortable in engendering the kind of confusion that they themselves declare to be endemic. One wants to say that Heraclitus is reveling in writing, even the unique temporality of writing, but this would probably take us too far. One thing is certain: not only must riddles be reread, but also that the better the riddle, the more it keeps on giving through time.⁷⁴

So the wise do not just build time into their sayings, but actually build in time as that which can be endlessly productive: Does Heraclitus say anything more specific about the relationship between wisdom and time? The gold standard for understanding Heraclitus is fragment 1:

And of the *logos* which is always humans are uncomprehending – both before having heard it and once having heard it. For although all happens according to this *logos*, they seem inexperienced experiencing both words and deeds such as I set out, by dividing according to the manner in which it bursts forth [*phusis*] and declaring what it is. And other humans overlook what they do after they have gotten up just as they forget what they do sleeping.

As Aristotle notes,⁷⁵ there is ambiguity in the first line, and this is a temporal ambiguity. Just what is “always”? Is it the *logos* or the incomprehension of people or both? Even if “always” modifies *logos*, the next clause tells us that humans do not understand it even before they have heard it;⁷⁶

they *have always already* not understood! This is the future perfect, the curious temporality of the funeral oration, and it is perhaps the answer to the riddle of the “present absent.”⁷⁷

The passage establishes, moreover, the centrality of logos as that which organizes *phusis* through division and which the inexperienced experience predigested, no matter what Heraclitus lays out for them. Perhaps this is because Heraclitus too is human and is not excluded from always already having not comprehended the logos. The only clear difference in this passage is between Heraclitus, who is at least dividing and declaring according to *phusis*, and the others, in that they cannot even remember what they have done after they have gotten up. Taken together, this suggests at least one realm for the one seeking comprehension of the logos to concern herself: divide and declare those riddling things revealed by *phusis* in connection with the past.

Logos can be understood more fully through Heraclitus’s use of the notion of a harmony. Here are the key passages:

[Heraclitus said] that which opposes brings together and from out of the bringing apart the most glorious harmony and all becomes according to strife.⁷⁸

Harmony not manifest is stronger than the manifest [harmony].⁷⁹

They do not understand how while differing from, [it] agrees with itself. [There is] a back-turning harmony, like [that of a bow or lyre].⁸⁰

Notice that in the first fragment the most glorious harmony actually emerges from the *bringing together* (*sumpherein*) of contraries from a kind of labor. The exact nature of this labor is unclear, but it seems to have been undertaken by Thucydides. Thucydides describes his work as “writing together” (*sungraphein*). This passage also performs its point about the unity of opposites insofar as it joins without further comment glorious harmony to strife. In the final fragment, we have the bow conjoined to the lyre, peace to war. As we have seen, this conjoining power of logos is also employed by Thucydides almost obsessively.

In the second fragment, we have the claim that the *hidden* harmony is in some way stronger, much like Thucydides’s most revealing *prophasis*. The role of harmony also parallels the role of logos in fragment 1 as that which is not manifest but is all the more powerful for its obscurity. Both the logos and a harmony serve to organize *phusis*. Indeed, a *harmonia* in Homer is a means of joining both things and people (from the verb *harmonozein*). Logos is also plausibly equated with other key images in Heraclitus’s corpus, like fire, soul, *kosmos*, and god. Such equating is as interesting as that which

may be learned from thinking through the association. We will think through the association of logos and harmonies. To this end, we will begin with the image of a harmony presented in fragment 51:

They do not understand how while differing from, [it] agrees with itself. [There is] a back-turning harmony, like [that of a bow or lyre].

A harmony is a proportion in time. A harmony preserves itself through time, through turning back upon itself, like a bow or lyre, or like this very aphorism, which ends by joining two seeming contraries.⁸¹ Heraclitus proves his own wisdom through maintaining that the wise man must be a master of proportion and then providing perfectly apportioned (attuned) sayings. Heraclitus does not craft just any proportion; his proportions maintain the very tensions that make them what they are.

Heraclitus's emphasis on the role of outright violence, *polemos* (war, violence), is widely known,⁸² but what is fighting, how and why, is not clear. The fascination with *polemos* makes sense if Heraclitus is arguing that the world (*phusis*) is organized by logos in the sense of *harmonia*, namely, self-maintaining tensions. Heidegger is fond of pondering Heraclitus's metaphysics in the following passage:⁸³

[According to Heraclitus,] that which emerges [*phusis*] favors [*philein*] self-concealing.⁸⁴

Why would *phusis* favor anything, much less favor hiding? Can it really be doing us a favor by hiding? My argument (following Heidegger) is that *phusis* hides because it is organized by the logos, which, as a harmony, is based on time, time as a continuous unfolding of contraries. The hiding is not willed, but it is a consequence of how logos functions. If the logos did not hide, then we could not use it, and this is how it favors us.

Following Seaford, the currency metaphor is particularly helpful here, which is to say that we could hardly use money in transactions and as a goal if we had in mind constantly that we were exchanging a mere thing, be it silver or paper, that we were conditioning our continued existence on the seemingly arbitrary respect that others accorded this thing. It is also well recognized that the self-concealing operation of money in an economy, though in a sense no more than the sum of the values accorded by people, is also not under the control of any or all people and that money may indeed function in a way that confounds the expectations and hopes of all involved. The same argument about the favor of self-concealing goes for words or laws. It is an important philosophical argument to maintain that, in fact, *all* human ordering functions similarly, including our deepest

values and our identities. Who we are is, arguably, of sterner stuff than the historically contingent development of currency, but the argument here is that in at least one fundamental way it is not. The achievement of an identity, for instance, is only an achievement for humans and only because of our unique experience of time. Yet time, which grants us identities, can also take them away. This warring that we do in time through logos can only be revealed, that is, divided and declared, through a logos that is itself appropriately, and isomorphically, temporal. Heraclitus's aphorisms are extremely terse instances of this. Thucydides's *History* is, from this perspective, an elaborate Heraclitean aphorism, drawn out to reveal a truly human temporality, a tragic temporality.

Thucydides as a Cure for Platonism

If Thucydides and Plato were not so similar, their differences would be far less important. Thucydides and Plato are near-contemporary⁸⁵ revolutionary prose writers who use the power of their medium (writing) to create entire new ways of looking at the world. Both authors are influenced by tragedy as well as by the travails of the Athenian democracy – especially by the travails of the Peloponnesian War. Indeed, both authors can be aptly described as Heraclitean in characterizing the violence and chaos characteristic of this world, a point noted by no less an authority than Aristotle.⁸⁶ Moreover, they share a realization that the near-simultaneous birth of rhetoric as a formal study and of the Athenian Empire marked the emergence of a new and unprecedented power, and that the failures of this new power were, in the highest sense, worthy of thought.

For Plato, there is *another* world, however, and it is a non-Heraclitean world upon which this world depends. For Plato, the wise man must transcend to a vision of the other world from the confused manifold of the mundane. For Thucydides, in contrast, there is no world beyond that of the polis. This is the heart of the contrast between Thucydides and Plato.⁸⁷

This contrast could be misunderstood. One might think that the difference comes down to whether the thinker is himself perpetrating violence. Thus it could appear that Plato violently abstracts from a chaotic world that Thucydides bravely describes as is. Yet this would be inaccurate; Thucydides is no passive observer. Thucydides's world is smaller than the real world: there are no women in it, almost no families, little commerce, intellectual life, or art, and the gods, well, the gods are nowhere to be seen.⁸⁸ This is clearly not an accident or a cultural norm; consider

Thucydides's great predecessor Herodotus. Thucydides labors on the world he discloses.

On the other hand, one might claim that whereas Thucydides's world is violent and his means of operating on it through his text is violent, Plato's texts disclose a world of peaceful contemplation through disclosing a world governed by reasoned discussion (and not force). This too is inaccurate. For instance, Plato compares true knowledge to a slave who has been *chained* down—an ancient technological metaphor.⁸⁹ In the Myth of the Cave there is compulsion everywhere.⁹⁰ Socrates states that one of the cave dwellers is *compelled* from the cave, *compelled* to answer a question, and *compelled* to look at the light of the fire. Now this is striking because the journey of the prisoner is supposed to represent that of the seeker after truth through dialectic, but this journey is one that, according to the story, one must be forced to take—just as true knowledge must be forced to stay in one place and just as Pericles has boasted that Athens has forced its memory upon the world.⁹¹ Indeed, Socrates, in presenting the allegory, explicitly compels his interlocutor through language, since three times Glaukon answers Socrates's questions with *ananke* words. Following Heidegger, we can say that Socrates has compelled both his interlocutor and his reader to overlook just how questionable his entire enterprise is. Following Wittgenstein, we might say that Socrates has bewitched us with an appealing but only apparently meaningful picture. The power of logos to create, indeed to compel one into, a world is awesome but not absolute; there can always be a counter-logos.⁹²

Given these similarities, how much difference does it make that Plato compels us into *another* world, while Thucydides compels us deeper into *this* one? After all, neither world is really like the world we (or anyone else) live in. The key difference is that the Forms live in Plato's other world. The Forms are reified, hierarchical, timeless abstractions that seem to defy logos itself. As reductive as Thucydides's analysis is (and must be), we have seen that time and logos prove fundamental to the ordering of the human world. There are many hidden relations (harmonies) in Thucydides—for example, between plague and civil war, between Pericles and Alcibiades, between Greek and barbarian. Yet in none of these cases is there a *hierarchy*—Greek does not somehow illuminate barbarian in the manner that the form of "horseness" illuminates all horses and the way that the form of the Good (*agathon*) illuminates everything. Put another way, the harmony of Heraclitus's back-turned bow is not only hidden, but presupposes that neither of the opposing terms triumph completely. There is no hierarchy; if either side of the bow were too strong, the bow would

snap. This is how Thucydides explains the manner in which opposing terms like “Greek” and “barbarian” function polemically.

Yet perhaps this difference is without a difference. Perhaps all of those painfully created verbal nouns are straining to become clear concepts, to form an extratemporal hierarchy. This reading strikes me as strained; there is a fundamental difference in metaphysics between Thucydides and Plato. Our job is to elucidate it. To orient ourselves further toward this difference, we will briefly return to the question that seems to have led Plato to articulate the theory of Forms: Meno’s paradox. It is the question of knowledge: How could one learn what one does not know? How could one even know what to look for?⁹³ Notice that the axis on which this issue turns is primarily a temporal difference.⁹⁴ Meno’s paradox asks how one can *first* learn anything. This is a temporal question that receives a temporal answer; the theory of *recollection* claims that all knowing presupposes a time before time. And not just a time before time, but a knowledge of templates with which one can compare information that one encounters. Based on the paradigm of the slave boy remembering his geometry, accessing knowledge is not necessarily a searing self-referential endeavor, though it is true as a matter of fact that, on many matters, the confusion wrought by politicians, rhetoricians, and poets has made the search for true knowledge difficult and dangerous.

Appropriately, in deducing a transvaluation of values in the *Laws*,⁹⁵ Plato first of all presupposes that he is in command of what these values are. He must implicitly deny that *logos* is *deinos* and must be confident in his ability to see before. He knows that his complicated architectonic for the polis will not lead to unexpected consequences, unlike Pericles’s espousal of *eros*.⁹⁶ For instance, there will presumably be no politically motivated lawsuits that eventually undermine lawfulness itself, as in Corcyra. That this polis cannot be constituted from any current polis because of the preexisting inequalities that exist everywhere already (and are a source of faction)⁹⁷ does not raise any particular alarm, even though, one must ask, from whence are these new colonists to come? Plato recognizes this question’s import, and it is made clear that there will be a selection process,⁹⁸ but he seems to treat it as a mere detail, of no interest in the deduction of the theoretically perfect polis. Yet this is an evasion of the *deinon*. How can it be that the good people selected are not “good” (*agathos*) because they have absorbed the values of their old poleis, including values such as *epieikeia*, values essential to the polis in coping with competition and with inequality? Does Plato think that somehow these norms can be guided, changed, turned off?⁹⁹ And who will be

doing the selecting and molding? Is the Stranger proposing all of this not only identified as an *Athenian*? And so, ultimately, how is this position any less fraught than that of Pericles the Athenian, trying to control the uncontrollable eros of the Athenians that is the source of their empire?

Yet the Platonic evasion of the *deinon* is not the only way to solve Meno's paradox. The paradox can be *dissolved* (rather than *resolved*) once one recognizes that the paradox is the problem – like Zeno's paradoxes, Meno's paradox is unsound. We do learn things and we do complete journeys. Nietzsche claims that Thucydides steadfastly refuses to see reason in reality, which is to say that, unlike Plato, Thucydides sees no conceptual intelligibility underlying reality, and specifically the world of the polis. What is it, in particular, that Thucydides does not see? It is timeless paradigms. Thucydides's treatment of power (*dunamis*) is the closest thing one finds in the text to a Platonic Form. Everything seems to be a matter of power. Commerce, religion, law, families, education, even death: all seem to be reducible to an analysis through power, as even death is mobilized for the polis through the *nomos* of the funeral oration. And yet, is there an extratemporal concept of power or is power rather a family of relationships that together do explanatory work? Better still, is power not an example of a "hidden harmony" amid difference that the wise man can see and that Thucydides is declaring? After all, what is essentially the same for Thucydides in the advent of material surpluses, Pericles's appeal to imagination, and the Syracusan use of reinforced prows? Power allows us to see connections between such disparate developments, but not in light of a uniform ideal.

And this is the manner in which Thucydides dissolves Meno's paradox.¹⁰⁰ There is no paradox because the paradox presupposes that learning can only happen through subsuming particulars under a discrete, universal, and noncircular set of general premises. If one were to attempt a logical analysis of Thucydides's concept of power, one would have to begin with a long (perhaps infinite) disjunction – say, "power is military might or rhetorical domination or expendable economic resources or a way of life," and so on. The terms of this disjunction would often *themselves* be defined in terms of power: economic resources are those resources that a polis has the power to use in advancing its own interests. Thus, like the polis that Thucydides the Athenian lived in, his text is composed of dense layers of self-reference, crisscrossing through time.¹⁰¹

Put another way, the Platonic model privileges *deduction*, while Thucydides privileges *abduction*.¹⁰² "Abduction" is Peirce's term for the

repeating self-referential structure through which science is actually done.¹⁰³ Unlike deduction, abduction is messy because it constantly involves modifying one's general premises on the basis of the very observations that these general premises make possible (i.e., deduction gives way to induction and vice versa). As we have repeatedly seen, there is knowledge throughout Thucydides's text, but not knowledge in the Platonic sense. Pericles's Funeral Oration does teach us about Athens – for instance, about the lawfulness of the Athenians. Yet this knowledge does not stay chained down. Thucydides's narration of the Plague follows the Funeral Oration, and soon Athenian lawfulness has broken down, seemingly completely. So ought one now to conclude that Pericles was wrong? Not if one reads further, because the Athenian polis does not succumb to anarchy; the Athenians fight on for decades, and over these decades the state functions more or less as it did before. But it is hardly as if the Plague had no effect at all; for instance, the Plague is implicated in several ways in Athenian anger at the Mytilenians. Athenian actions concerning Mytilene affect the shape of the rest of the war. It is not just that this chain does not end, but that each new link has a dynamic relation with every other link.

This dynamism points to the aspect of the abductive functioning of Thucydides's text that I would like to emphasize: *abduction is inherently temporal, and the temporality is tragic*. Not only is there no logical hierarchy of what concept depends on what, but there is not even a hierarchy based on temporal priority. No term can be said to precede another because each term can only exist through maintaining its tension with every other one. Heraclitus's back-turned bow is an irresistible but perhaps ultimately overly simplistic image; it is Thucydides who inaugurates us into a world organized as a back-turned bow. Thucydides thus offers a concrete and sharply articulated alternative to Platonism. Thucydides's metaphysics is Heraclitean, and the narrative he composes pushes the Heraclitean logic of contemporary tragedy into the space it must occupy – the polis. Put another way, since human temporality is tragic, humans learn through the back-turned process of abduction. Thucydides founds a world because his world performs tragic temporality and allows those who wish to see clearly to abduct their way to wisdom.

Thucydidean Realism

Thucydides is a metaphysical realist. The cramped world of his text that he wrenches out of the broader world in which he lives reveals otherwise

hidden aspects of that broader world, but this does not happen through the revelation of nature-like laws or even clear concepts. This is a subtle difference. We will try to make it plain by considering the maneuverings and battles in the Peloponnesus during the Peace of Nicias that form the immediate background for the Melian Dialogue. Even if one does not read Thucydides's second introduction at 5.26 as starting a whole new work (as Rawlings does),¹⁰⁴ it surely represents a new beginning of sorts. As noted previously, in introducing the remainder of the war, there is no longer a need to discuss predecessors or any events preceding this war. The narrative that follows does not need an external introduction because it so clearly reveals the same world. Here is Argos, a democracy, one trying to ally with other democracies¹⁰⁵ and blessed in its resources because of peace,¹⁰⁶ estimating that now is the time to challenge Sparta for hegemony of the Peloponnesus. In fact, the Argives *see* that war will come¹⁰⁷ and will even engage in a dramatic (but failed) effort to construct Long Walls.¹⁰⁸ Alcibiades, in his first actions of the work, outmaneuvers Nicias for a combination of personal and strategic reasons¹⁰⁹ and places Athens back on a collision course with Sparta through advocating a new and potentially decisive strategy of trying to defeat the Spartans on land and near home. There seems no need to belabor the density, consistency, ubiquity, and familiarity on display here, not only in the connection to what has already happened, but also to what is to come, including the revolt of Chios.

There is a great temptation to reduce the consistency and ubiquity characteristic of a world to a mechanical or natural process. We have already discussed the passages in Thucydides's *Archaeology* that would seem to support such a view and found that they do not. We have also discussed many other key passages and themes that more obviously cannot be so reduced, such as the figure of Pericles. Yet what of the case of Argos and how it relates to those of Athens and Chios? Is this not a demonstration of an almost mechanical process? To accept such a mechanical reading is to experience the *logos* as one who is inexperienced.

Following Heraclitus, we know to look to the past in order to grasp the *logos* as *polemos*. One way to do this and to literally throw a wrench into the machine is through the figure of Alcibiades, who first emerges in the *History* in the context of these diplomatic machinations. We are told immediately that Alcibiades would have been considered too young in any other city but was honored because of the worth of his ancestors,¹¹⁰ many of whom were the same as those of his relative and (one of) his

guardians, namely, Pericles. Here is a flash of the deeply singular, both in the figure of Alcibiades, whose unique skills and interests would play a central role in the events that followed, but also of Athens, and its unique estimation of what is worthy. The Argives will fight a *land* war against Sparta and lose; they are not a new kind of power. Nor, ultimately, are the Syracusans the new Athenians,¹¹¹ as their diminutive presence in Book Eight demonstrates. This was not how the Athenians pursued the Persians. The connections Thucydides positions us to see are not mechanical;¹¹² they have a human temporality, which is also distinct from the cyclical time of nature.

Machines and animals operate in time, of course, but they do not operate in tragic temporality because they do not wrestle with their own identities. Only humans can be false to whom they are and yet somehow are not at the moment, even while it is also true that humans can change who they are. The line between not living up to and changing one's identity is a subtle one, indeed so subtle that it is never firmly decided. The relationship between Alcibiades and the Athenians demonstrates this. The Athenians give Alcibiades honor (a nominal form of *axiōō*)¹¹³ and fear him because of his enormity, and in particular they fear that he aspires to be a tyrant.¹¹⁴ The Corinthians, who seem to know the Athenians so well and seem to praise Athens even as they try to urge others to destroy it, are afraid of Athens's enormity and tendency toward tyranny. The Athenians, like Pentheus, do not know who they are, or perhaps it is because of who they are that they, like Ajax, must cross the line into self-destruction.¹¹⁵ After all, we know what happened to the Athens that only half-trusted Alcibiades, but we do not know what might have happened to the Athens that entirely trusted him, namely, let him lead the assault on Syracuse. The Athens that never confronted the riddle of an Alcibiades, of a leader as individually dynamic as the collective, is arguably no Athens at all. This ambivalence at the heart of Athenian identity goes all the way back to the heroes to whom they paid homage, which is why we get an elaborate repeat of the Harmodius and Aristogeiton story. This story does not settle the question, but unsettles it in illuminating ways. This is what it means to use the past to have a more polemical relationship with the logos, to use the past in order to set up a new relationship and to see something new.

Such polemical wisdom does not produce the kind of chained-down wisdom that one can deploy at will, like Plato's chained-down slave. As noted previously, Plato's political wisdom is such that the traditional, and amorphous, values collected under the rubric of *epieikeia* can be, indeed

should be, dispensed with in a properly organized polis. And so here at last we have a pragmatic truth derivable from our reading of Thucydides: *epieikeia* is not expendable. Heraclitean polemical wisdom will indeed be slow to deduce new ways of organizing society. That said, this does not mean that Thucydides should be read as some sort of complacent Burkean. For one thing, Thucydides's Heraclitean world changes, even if for the worst and even if no one wishes it to. The old ways may well have died forever at Corcyra, like it or not. Plato is arguably responding to a real lacuna, and his analysis is not without merit. The deep practical difference between the two thinkers in connection with *epieikeia* is not whether there is a place for policy intervention, or even what the justification for such an intervention might be, but what is the ongoing attitude toward the intervention. In a Heraclitean world, no solution is ever stable because there is no bedrock, and a sustained, though inherently messy, tension, such as that between the fierce competitiveness of Athenian life and *epieikeia*, is not just acceptable, but about as desirable an outcome as is imaginable. For a Platonist, such an outcome is testament to the failure of the underlying conception. Just as Pericles may not have been able to teach political wisdom to his children, even though it was wisdom all the same, for Thucydides, the thinker of history, knowledge of history is not necessarily useful and can even be outright destructive, as it was in Corcyra.¹¹⁶ What the wise can see in Thucydides's *History* is not directly oriented towards its usefulness, but is mediated through grasping a clarity.¹¹⁷ This does not make the work useless, nor can its purpose only be recouped as a kind of cognitive or conceptual practice. The favor that Thucydides did us by declaring the Peloponnesian War cannot be compared to that provided by a tool or even by a teacher who teaches one how to learn to use many tools. Tools and teachers presuppose worlds, and worlds themselves are not properly described or justified by the terms they enable.

Book Eight

In fleshing out what "world" means here, the unfinished state of Book Eight is particularly helpful.¹¹⁸ The book contains no direct speeches, but rather more detailed references to treaties; it is also generally more schematic than the other books. However, Thucydides did live to the end of the war and revised what he had written. Reaching the end could not have been the primary objective of this increased schematization. Connor notes that the book requires many more chapters to get through

the events of one year than previous books, and this is without any speeches.¹¹⁹ He attributes this narrative explosion to the widening scope of the war; events from Persia to Sicily had become as relevant as the convoluted intrigues that were wracking Athens internally.

We can understand this explosion as being a necessary precondition for a new world being founded. Not only must there not be an ending, there must be more and more to talk about. Most notably, there is the description of the dismemberment of the Athenian polis, as now Athens itself is wracked by the class warfare it had sought to take advantage of elsewhere. Now the Athenians are literally at sea because the navy, based in Samos, represents the Athenian democracy against the oligarchs in control of the land of Athens; indeed, each party is trying to compel (verbal form of *ananke*) the other to adopt its preferred *politeia*.¹²⁰ Surely this is not what Pericles intended (or even could have intended) when he encouraged the Athenians to see themselves as an island people,¹²¹ much less to compel the world to have a memory of Athens,¹²² much less that this is how the Athenians are to be a paradigm for Greece.¹²³ In other words, the Athenians (like Pericles), in living out the destiny of who they are, have shattered against the *deinon* counterturning of time. As Connor notes, by Book Eight even the Persian Empire is not treated as monolithic, which is to say that there is competition between satraps, concern about the king, and so on.¹²⁴ There is more and more to decipher and discuss as the great certainties break down.

And so, it is as if we are watching the severed limbs of Pentheus alternating between fighting one another and trying once more to become one. But the dismemberment is not only spatial or political, but *temporal*. The summer/winter framework can no longer even provide the appearance of holding events together, and there is no longer a unifying temporal perspective, generally the perspective of Athens.¹²⁵ Even the temporally directed actions of individuals are increasingly chaotic. Ships are sailing all over the Aegean,¹²⁶ revolts are taking place from Athens, within cities, and within Athens,¹²⁷ and no one knows where the Phoenician fleet is. The sentences in Book Eight are, accordingly, themselves bubbling over with near-impossible temporal references.¹²⁸

Of course, individuals and cities, like the Chians, are acting as best they can, and Alcibiades is thriving. But no one knows just what kind of government Alcibiades would support and if he has any loyalty other than to himself. Even Thucydides, in a Herodotean moment, is unsure just what the Persian Tissaphernes's stance is toward the Greeks, though he does share with us the perspective that appears to him with the most clarity

(superlative of *saphes*), namely, that, per Alcibiades's advice, Tissaphernes is trying to wear down both sides.¹²⁹ This narrative explosion is our final initiation into the world of the *History*. The sphere of self-difference and the violence of its counterturning have grown so large and insistent that we can do nothing but live within them. We are still living in the aftermath of the collapse of the Athenian Empire. We turn around and find that the narrative and its concerns have enveloped us, that the text's concerns are our concerns, from the grounding of law to the very pressing question of the compatibility of democracy and empire. And so, I should say that it is not so much that Xenophon "understood" (i.e., had the mental event) that Thucydides had initiated him into a world that needed to continue, but that his text is the first we have that is testament to the metaphysical event of Thucydides's text, of the creation of a world. And, to repeat, the reason Thucydides's world has expanded so insistently is that, for all of its idiosyncrasies, it reveals truths about the real world, though not in the form of historical laws.

It is important to note here that tragic confusion does not just build up as time moves forward, but accelerates backward as well. De Romilly notes in connection with Euripides's *Medea* that "the whole past and future will be mixed up in this special [tragic] action."¹³⁰ Again and again in tragedy, obscure and surprising moments from the past intrude upon the present and the future, but the intrusion is never just one way. The future also affects the past. We have already seen how Dionysus's future radically alters the past history of the House of Cadmus. Dionysus equates his epiphany with *retelling* the story of his disgraced mother. In this case, as in so many others (e.g., in the *Agamemnon*), the past that is constantly being referred to and battled over is the past that decides who one is. Is Dionysus a god? Did his mother disgrace herself or consort with Zeus?

The story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is just one brief example of this battle for identity that occurs throughout the *History*, and especially in Book One. There is not only the famous Corinthian characterization of the Athenians, not just the Pentecontaetia, but when the Athenians are given the opportunity to defend themselves at Sparta, they immediately turn to the past, particularly to the Persian Wars.¹³¹ Taking control of one's history, of one's identity, seems to be central to the national interest. Of course, as Pentheus and the Athenians will demonstrate, such control is impossible, which points to another explanation for the state of Book Eight as it is. One profoundly disturbing aspect of the book is the spectacle of the Athenians and Spartans falling over each other to bring the Persians into their war. This is beyond the Athenians losing their

vaunted *epieikeia* or the Spartans destroying Plataea despite its role in the victory over the Persians. As we know from Book One (and from many other contemporary sources), there is no way to overstate the importance of the victory over the Persians to Greek identity. The Corinthians had proposed “borrowing” money from temples to build a navy, but not aid from the Persians.¹³² Archidamus, defensively and obliquely, suggests the possibility of enlisting the help of non-Greeks but does not name the Persians.¹³³ In this final confused spectacle, the war has revealed that even one’s most secured past achievements remain hostage to the future.

Philosophical Implications

It is convenient to label the approach of this book to Thucydides “continental,” and it is relative to that of others, such as Allison, though this label (like all labels) has limitations. Certainly I believe that Nietzsche and Heidegger have more to teach us about Thucydides than Quine or Sellars, which should not be surprising given these thinkers’ interests. Indeed, it is extraordinary that Allison chooses to engage the philosophical import of Thucydides through a philosophical tradition that is itself antihistorical. Put another way, notions central to analytic philosophy of language, such as Quine’s “eternal sentences,”¹³⁴ would seem to deny that Thucydides’s work as historical has any philosophical import at all except as some kind of fuzzy precursor to clear thinking.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that suspicion of the prioritization of mental representations so crucial to Allison is not alien to the analytic tradition. There is Wittgenstein, discussed at length in Appendix III, most obviously, and more recently, there is Robert Brandom.¹³⁵ Brandom’s distinction between “representational” and “referential” theories of meaning strikes me as particularly helpful here. Allison ably demonstrates long, complex chains of reference, and the condition of possibility of such chains is often Thucydides’s unusual vocabulary. Yet Allison also believes that a complex chain of reference implies mediating conceptual representation.¹³⁶ This is a particularly unhappy blurring of the distinction Brandom makes because the whole point of relying on reference to understand meaning is to avoid the need to appeal to intentions, that is, mental objects.¹³⁷

A key difference, one might think, between a representational and a referential theory of meaning is the role that a referential theory must give to time. One can insist that time has nothing to do with meaning if meaning is about a mental object.¹³⁸ If meaning is a matter of reference,

is entirely outside of the head, then time intrudes, but what kind of time and with what implications? Perhaps the right approach to use in answering these questions is to start with very modest examples of language and to build up from them. However, if “language” is just a shadow of logos, and if logos should be the object of our concern when we wish to understand meaning, and if the production of meaning is *deinon* because of its relationship with human, that is, tragic, temporality, then the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and we simply must start out “big” because only a great text can incorporate a human temporality. And this is what we have done. De Romilly believes that each of the tragedians manifests an implicit philosophy of time in his plays and suggests that this foregrounding of time may be why tragedy and history were born almost simultaneously.¹³⁹ She does not, however, develop this suggestion, and this is another way of characterizing the task this book undertook. If we understand how tragic temporality is implicated in the founding of history, then we have learned something important about the interaction of time and meaning.

Tragic temporality twists back upon itself. Yet this turning back upon who and what one is does not lead to closed, even claustrophobic, dramatic action.¹⁴⁰ On the contrary, with each twist, the stage becomes larger; more people and cities, greater pieces of the past and the future, become relevant. Oedipus’s self-directed actions are, as ever, a paradigm, but we have seen other examples, from Aeschylus’s Agamemnon to that of Euripides. But tragedies end, and they occur at seemingly remote times in the past, even as their logic demands that they do not end and that their action occur right now. The Athenians and others play out the drama of their identity on a stage that stretches from Sicily to Asia Minor, and they do so in the present.

This is also the justification for Hegel’s seamless movement between the tragedians and Thucydides. We have not only demonstrated thematic or linguistic parallels, but have also revealed a common metaphysics. More importantly, we have deciphered a piece of that metaphysics, and it turns out to be Heraclitean: we humans are creatures with logos, but we do not actually possess logos. If anything, words and the entire order they partake in, possess *us*. This odd relationship with what we are is why we are most *deinon*. Pentheus is at the mercy of his name, the Athenians are at the mercy of their shared stories, and all of Greece is at the mercy of the accounts of civil war.

Nietzsche suggested that Thucydides could be a cure for Platonism. We are now also in a position to justify this claim. Our most potent tool

to that end is our understanding of the tragic temporality at work in Thucydides but not in Plato. Plato's answer to the question of knowledge and to the possibility of human life in general commits him to a stance on time. The Forms, of course, are not in time. Time is the factor that separates knowledge from opinion, the philosopher from the sophist. Indeed, insofar as in time all things can be different from themselves, time is the condition of possibility of sophistry.

Aristotle, in seeking to avoid an appeal to the Forms and to eternity, proposes a different approach, but even he fails to articulate tragic temporality. His treatment of time is complex and is focused on time as manifested in the movement of physical objects out of privation. There is no explicit discussion of the time in which humans live as being in anyway different or finer-grained. That said, as noted by Hodge, there is at least an implicit more human temporality elsewhere in Aristotle.¹⁴¹ There are the life changes, as discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*, the importance of unified action in Chapter 8 of the *Poetics*, the changes in constitution treated in the *Politics*, and yet another sort of change (not based on privation) that is characteristic of perception in *De Anima* 2.5.¹⁴² But these are merely tantalizing hints. As Aristotle himself would probably have granted, these hints are worth pursuing because one encounters the human predicament in tragedy, not in the *Physics*.¹⁴³

Neither tragedy nor history is performed in a time like that of a flying arrow. Pentheus is addressed as mad even before he is actually made mad by Dionysus. This is appropriate because this drama revolves around the fact that the recognition of Dionysus's divinity cannot be as of the present moment. If Dionysus is truly a god, then he always was a god, just as Pentheus was always mad. The drama of Pericles likewise admits of no simple direction. As we have seen, there is no telling where Pericles begins and ends. Thucydides's Archaeology not only echoes the Periclean rhetoric of empire, but obeys the Periclean imperative to love Athens and to memorialize its greatness. Yet both Thucydides's Archaeology and Pericles's Funeral Oration deconstruct themselves, especially when read back through the future. For instance, jarring transitions and unlikely antitheses in the Funeral Oration fly apart in time to such an extent that they will eventually be personified in Cleon and Diodotus, Nicias and Alcibiades.

Most discussions of Thucydides's temporality focus on the question of his objectivity, on whether he presents a "god's-eye view." If he does not, would he have considered such a perspective desirable? These are not my issues because such abstracted notions of time cannot account

for Thucydides's accomplishment. My claim is that Thucydides founds a world. This means that he is *subtly* different from his predecessors, and in a manner that will be decisive for all that is to come. The summer/winter framework was neither necessary nor sufficient for world formation, whereas Thucydides's deployment of tragic temporality in the contemporary world was necessary.¹⁴⁴ World formation is a metaphysical event with metaphysical conditions of possibility.

What is tragic temporality? From our discussion of *deinon* we know that this temporality is nonlinear, indeed that it turns back on itself.¹⁴⁵ We have also learned that a world structured by logos is the precondition for such a counterturning. Logos does not obey our orders, but rather its own, and it is in fact only because it obeys its own rules that it can truly serve us (again, the currency metaphor is very instructive here). But since we are the creatures with logos, the *deinon* twists of logos are our own-most destiny. From our discussion of the Funeral Oration, we understand that in the polis we find tragic temporality performed not only by individuals and cities, but also by institutions.¹⁴⁶ Heraclitus has provided us with the most striking images of the *deinon* functioning of the logos: it is always already hidden, it maintains itself in contraries, and it is back-turned. Heraclitus also provides the clue for how to look for the workings of logos in our world. We must patiently struggle with our own past in order to see the hidden harmonies of logos. Heraclitus says that such back-turned harmonies must be there. The tragedians dramatize these harmonies, and the open-ended logic of the *deinon* demands that such harmonies be found throughout *our* world. Yet the tragedies do not dramatize our world. Can one find the tragic insight at play in our world? Hegel thought so (as did Nietzsche and maybe Heidegger), and he thought that one can find such a play of contraries in Thucydides. But Hegel did not tell us how or where. The goal of this book has been to clear away the obstacles to our seeing the play of tragic temporality in Thucydides and beyond.

And so, I agree with Nietzsche that Thucydides offers an alternative to Plato in his patient display of tragic temporality, but one may ask why we would *want* such an alternative. By highlighting Thucydides's courageous fascination with our world, I believe to have suggested an answer, but this is only a preliminary skirmish in a far larger dispute. Part of this dispute will no doubt involve my privileging of what I have labeled tragic temporality. Again, even if it were granted that such a thing exists and exists in Thucydides, one could argue that this is precisely the reason Thucydides's work is decisively flawed. I am following others, notably

Heidegger, in claiming that tragic temporality has a deep connection to the fundamental features of our world, especially *logos*.

This can be disputed, and in fact it is disputed; philosophers as diverse as Quine and Husserl see time as a distraction from the serious task of discovering what words mean. And this is time conceived as a succession, much less the confused twistings of tragic temporality, which is presumably a distraction from a distraction. From this roughly Platonic perspective, tragic temporality is at most merely the convention of a literary genre. Still, on the other side, we can now point to Thucydides's *History* and ask whether it is really plausible to account for its power as a result of a pleasing convention or whether it is rather more hard-headed to accept that the text of Thucydides has meaning, but meaning that is not stable, but rooted in time, and, because this is an especially human time, this is why his text is as powerful as it is.

Conclusion

Thucydides's *History* has no conclusion; it is not even entirely accurate to claim that it has an introduction. After all, it is only in the course of a few magisterial sentences that Thucydides initiates us into the world that his work exemplifies. This book, by contrast, has both an introduction and a conclusion. The various chapters and sections have been foreshadowed and organized as explicitly as possible; there are footnotes where appropriate and a carefully formatted bibliography. There is no doubt that this book is a work *within* a genre and does not inaugurate a new one. With a work within a genre, I have attempted to explain the ability of another work to create a genre, indeed a world. To that end, I can simply point to the lack of a Thucydidean introduction or conclusion. It is not just that Thucydides lacks criteria to appeal to, but that he specifically has no temporal criteria. There is nothing in his work that suggests an end. Admittedly, Thucydides tells us that the war lasted twenty-seven years and he declares in his first line that he will compose *this* war, but the world-founding work that we have ends in midsentence.

The story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton could have been a Euripidean tragedy, except for its relative contemporaneity and the way in which it is implicated in events all over the Mediterranean world. Contemporaneous versus mythological temporality and ever-broader contextualization are by themselves not enough to have made Thucydides's *History* a foundational text for modern historiography and political science. The final necessary ingredient is precisely that the story of Harmodius and

Aristogeiton *could* have indeed been a tragedy. In other words, a foundational work must have at its core pointed questions that can and must be asked over and over again and, in so doing, implicate the one who asks – that is, it must perform tragic temporality. Moreover, the seriousness of these questions demands that they not be stilled with facile answers. The self-referential riddles posed by Pentheus or Alcibiades are always worth taking up again precisely because they question their own conditions of possibility. This is to say that even the simplest riddle presupposes both *chronos* and *logos*, but a profound riddle presupposes that this relationship is *deinon*. There can be no profound riddle if *logos* will provide one answer for all time; great riddles are expansive. Heraclitus's aphorisms, Attic Tragedy, and Thucydides's *History* are nothing if not full of riddles. The history that was born out of Attic Tragedy was born out of self-exploration, and like any method that can truly produce self-knowledge, it is not a given but a gift.

Appendix I

Restoring Key Terms 1.1–1.23

Because the means by which a world is disclosed are hidden and, indeed, withdraw from view, there are several issues in the key programmatic sections of 1.21–3 that I believe have been consistently misunderstood. There is no better way further to illustrate the subtle workings of Thucydides's Archaeology than to dissolve some of the errors that surround it. The issues I will discuss relate to “unconcealedness” (*aletheia*), “what is appropriate” (*ta deonta*), “pre-text” (*prophasis*), “compulsion” (*ananke*), and “kind” (*toioutos*).

Unconcealedness (*Aletheia*)

Thucydides does seem interested in *aletheia*, which is usually translated as “truth.” Truth is understood conventionally as positing a correspondence between word and world, and so, this interpretation maintains, when Thucydides discusses the importance of *aletheia*, he is emphasizing the importance of matching up his language to events (logos to *ergon*). Yet Thucydides uses neither *aletheia* nor *to alethes* particularly often in these opening sections (or generally, especially not in his own voice). He does, as we have seen, employ numerous visual words, such as *to saphes*, at crucial places. These words are in turn often translated in terms of “truth,” even “historical truth,”¹ but such translations put the cart before the horse. The converse seems far more apt; that is, *aletheia* should be understood in terms of *to saphes* and other visual terms rather than the other way around.

In Thucydides's Archaeology visual metaphors dominate vis-à-vis truth claims.² Further, in specific contexts, Thucydides is quite able to assert

that a claim or description is true in the sense that it corresponds to reality,³ but Thucydides does not do this often, and he does not do it in the Archaeology. And thus we should not efface the explicit visual language as somehow “primitive” (i.e., aspiring to real truth) or metaphorical, especially when there is a sophisticated philosophical tradition both before and after Thucydides that takes the priority of vision seriously – see the preceding discussion of the Presocratics, eros in both Gorgias’s *Helen* and Plato’s *Phaedrus* (also the allegories in the *Republic*), and *sophia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. And it is not just the philosophical tradition, there is also the tragic tradition, which, as we have seen, relies upon and dramatizes the human situation as bounded by vision of a complex sort. Human vision is further complicated by its tendency not to see that which it has most need of seeing.

The word *aletheia* is generally, though not uniformly, believed to retain the visual force of its etymology – “as that which is not concealed.”⁴ If this is true, then we have all the more reason for associating claims concerning *aletheia* with the dominant visual imagery. Thomas Cole has maintained (contra Friedländer) that *aletheia* does retain a connection with *lethe* (oblivion) and that this connection is exploited as late as Plato’s *Phaedrus*.⁵ Hence the significance of the words *a-letheia* and *a-kribeia* in the key sections of Thucydides’s Archaeology. These two related alpha privative words convey the difficulty of using logos in a manner that does not cover up as much as, if not more than, it succeeds in bringing to light.⁶ In fact, Cole observes that *akribeia* is a characteristic especially associated with written texts, and it is in Thucydides that for the first time *aletheia* too is claimed to be the product of the type of precise method seemingly possible only through writing.⁷

It can be argued that there is a *prima facie* distinction between “not-noticed” and “unconcealed.”⁸ I must admit that I have a hard time grasping this distinction because in both cases *aletheia* is a visual accomplishment related to logos. I presume that somehow not-not-noticed is more reasonable.⁹ Heidegger’s notion of unconcealedness sounds as if the objects of *aletheia* are glowing, demanding to be seen,¹⁰ whereas what a logos can do is merely to keep a hero mentioned among human subjects again and again – no glowing is required. Heidegger does employ visual vocabulary to illustrate his point about *aletheia*, but in so doing, he sees himself as following a tradition (which he is), and it appears dubious to object to his position merely on account of the violence with which he brings vision to the fore. After all, Heidegger plausibly rejects the whole subject-object distinction upon which Cole (following Snell) would seem

to rely. If it is nonsense to say that truth lights up objects, it is, arguably, at least as nonsensical (though very modern) to claim that to be true is to be kept in the minds of human subjects.

Finally, it is procrustean to read the bulk of Thucydides's narrative as something that corresponds to reality. Correspondence presupposes exactly that separation between logos and the world that I believe Thucydides's text is remarkable for constantly challenging. Indeed, Thucydides's success in opening a world through logos is a decisive argument against reifying this distinction.

What Is Appropriate (*Ta Deonta*)

It is easy to see why the speeches pose such a problem for those interpreters who believe that Thucydides is attempting to provide us with a list of propositions that correspond with reality. *Prima facie*, there just seems to be no way that this could be true. Not only are the speeches too numerous, too long, and given in too many places over too long a period, but they all share the dense Thucydidean style and interest in abstraction that make one wonder to what extent they could have been given at all.¹¹ Now it is not as if Thucydides tells us to expect transcripts. Instead, Thucydides tells us that he did not and could not provide the speeches contained in his work verbatim, and Woodman argues convincingly that Thucydides *would not* have wanted to do so even if it had been possible.¹² The actual speeches would surely not have allowed Thucydides to create the same cross-referencing and self-referencing whole that he did in fact compose. Thucydides does tell us that he will provide *ta deonta*. Ostwald, looking for abstract necessity and thus a backdoor means of preserving the correspondence of these speeches with reality, translates this phrase as "factors objectively inherent in each situation demanded of each speaker" rather than simply "what was needed" or "what was appropriate."¹³

This is especially implausible given that *ta deonta* seems to be a fairly technical rhetorical term (related to *kairos* and thereby to time); it is the constraint that every rhetor and writer on rhetoric faces. As Macleod puts it:

Ta deonta is a notion as complex as rhetoric itself is complex. Partly it refers to the content of a speech which gives the 'necessary' advice in any given circumstances; this is no doubt the sense in which Pericles uses it of his own oratory (2.60.5). But in 1.22.1 [our passage] it applies rather to those elements of a speech which make it coherent or persuasive, the valid presentation of a 'case.' It corresponds to what Aristotle in drama calls τὰ ἐνόντα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα [the possible and the

suitable – *Poet.* 1450b5]; used of drama, where, as in Thucydides, contradictory viewpoints are often presented, such a phrase cannot mean simply that the author endorses the speaker's views. What the historian does say is that every speech will be as apt and effective in its situation as possible.¹⁴

Macleod is himself too dogmatic in limiting the sense of *ta deonta* in our passage. For instance, he fails to ask why Pericles's use is not relevant rhetorically. But on the whole, his approach is surely the right one.

Relatedly, Thucydides declares that the speeches adhere as closely as possible to the *sumpasa gnome*. One ought to take *sumpasa gnome* not as the “general gist” (as it usually is taken), but as the “entire point of view” or “purport” (as Liddell, Scott and Jones' *Lexicon* puts it) or, still more precisely, as the “entirety of that which was recognized.” I think that “entire point of view” is an adequate and elegant way of putting it, especially since it retains the sense that *that* which is recognized is not obvious, is not a view from nowhere, but is also not all-encompassing. *Gnome* as point of view gains support not just through the explicitly visual metaphors Thucydides uses throughout his Archaeology, but through the fact that in other places, including the work of Thucydides himself,¹⁵ *gnome* definitely means the overall position an orator adopted in a speech.¹⁶ Since this word is used in the section about speeches and is modified by *sumpasa* – “altogether,” it seems particularly plausible to take *gnome* as point of view, and thus Thucydides has promised to provide what was needed by a speaker who is arguing from a particular perspective and in a very specific situation.

Pretext (*Prophasis*)

The word *prophasis* should have a clear enough meaning, namely, a pretext.¹⁷ However, on account of the context in which Thucydides uses this word in 1.23.6, particularly the adjective “most revealing,” it has created an enormous amount of confusion. Here is my translation of the complete passage, along with the emphasis I believe is in the original:

I have first set forth the charges and differences *why* they dissolved [the peace], lest someone ever seek from what such a war happened to the Hellenes. For the *most revealing pretext* [ἐλληθεστάτη πρόφασις], though the one least manifest in logos, the Athenians, I believe, growing great and providing fear to the Lacedaimonians, compelled into warring.

Because of *prophasis*'s psychological connotations and its description here as supposedly having the most *aletheia* (i.e., truth), *prophasis* is, as noted

previously, generally understood as the “necessary cause” of the war that underlies the various more direct causes (such as conflicts over Corcyra and Potidaea). The actual content of the *prophasis* is associated with the growth of the Athenian Empire and its attendant psychological implications, both for the Athenians and the Spartans. The two great cities were destined for conflict. This “truest *prophasis*” is what is least often spoken about, but it is often alluded to in the speeches that follow. Some commentators, such as Marc Cogan, go so far as to attempt to disentangle a *prophasis* from the *aitia* (“charges”).¹⁸ And Thucydides does indeed discuss the growth of Athenian power in the Pentecontaetia after he has already gone through the more immediate conflicts over Corcyra and Potidaea.¹⁹ This suggests that the *prophasis* of the war was the long-term growth of Athens and the resulting Spartan fears, while the *aitiai* were the events that actually brought them into conflict. Nevertheless, this passage is an extremely vague and unhelpful way for Thucydides to create such an important distinction. This is a distinction he never mentions again, does not stick to,²⁰ and even undermines because Thucydides does not record particularly aggressive Athenian actions in the 430s B.C.; and, for what it’s worth, it does not register on Dionysius of Halicarnassus.²¹

But the most peculiar aspect of this reading of *prophasis* as something like the “true deep cause” is that it leaves out the superlative, the prefix, the visual force of *aletheia*, and the core meaning of *prophasis* (namely, something specious). We are not given the *true prophasis*, but rather the *most revealing pretext* (indeed, “pre-saying/showing”). Furthermore, Thucydides makes it clear that this is the reason least often given in logos. And this leads us back to what *prophasis* usually means, an alleged motive or pretext. Thucydides is about to lay out “the most revealing pretext least often manifested in argument.”²² Thus there is something about the point that follows that is helpful for the reader who seeks wisdom but not necessarily something true. At this point, we are well positioned to understand how a pretext can be more or less true in the sense of unconcealing. The pretext that Thucydides labels as possessing most *aletheia* not only manages to reveal phenomena that are themselves inclined to hide, but this is a pretext that is inclined to hide itself. It is thus not surprising that philologists have been able to uncover this pretext at work throughout the *History* because holding the work together is itself the criterion for a pretext being “most revealing.” We have already seen how the most revealing *prophasis* can explain Athenian, Spartan, and Theban behavior in precipitating the war, that is, they all thought it inevitable, but, insofar as this belief is self-justifying, it remains specious.

One could object to this reading of *prophasis* by pointing to 6.6.1. Here Thucydides, seemingly in his own voice, and with no ambiguity, states outright why the Athenians *really* sailed against Syracuse. This objection is understandable given the usual translations. Here is Crawley:

[The Athenians] being ambitious in real truth [ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις] of conquering the whole, although they had also the specious design of succouring their kindred and other allies.

This translation is motivated by a similar translation of 1.23.6, as well as by later repetitions of the claim that the Athenians were out to capture all of Sicily (especially at 6.8.4). We have already seen that 1.23.6 cannot be the basis for translating the *prophasis* with the most *aletheia* as “real truth,” but perhaps we need to read this notion of causality backward. Here is my translation of the passage, sticking to the principles of translation already used to provide a more satisfactory translation of 1.23.6:

[The Athenians] were going [to Sicily] to rule all – this is the most revealing pretext – but they desired simultaneously and plausibly to help their kinsmen and additional allies.²³

Note that on any translation, what the Athenians *say* is credited with power; moreover, in this case, there is no claim that this *prophasis* was in any way hidden. Hence the many public references to this *prophasis* in the ensuing narrative. For example, when Alcibiades is at Sparta, he claims that the expedition was aimed not only at all of Sicily but also at Italy and Carthage! And only after all of this would the Athenians invade the Peloponnesus, and with the most warlike barbarians.²⁴ Alcibiades knows his audience, as does Gylippus, who also appeals to Athenian ambitions in order to rouse his troops.²⁵ Meanwhile, the fourth century B.C. Attic orators appeal to the Athenian desire to help their kinsmen in Sicily as *the* reason for the expedition.²⁶

It could be objected that the orators are merely parroting Athenian imperial propaganda, while Alcibiades and Gylippus, however overheated their rhetoric, are pointing to the truth that Thucydides here provides. Indeed. The most revealing pretext, the argument that carried the day, is more effective at drawing the work together; for example, the endlessness of Athenian ambition suggested by the *prophasis* connects the expedition all the way back to Pericles’s initial vision of Athenian power, the Corinthian description of Athens, the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and so on. All the same, the Athenians’ desire to aid their kinsmen is not to be dismissed, if only because the Athenians themselves believe

it. This passage does not represent the espousal of impersonal laws of history that trump whatever people may say. On the contrary, this passage, like 1.23.6, is all about the power of the arguments (*logoi*) we live by.

Up to this point, I have not discussed Hunter Rawlings's impressive study of *prophasis*. First of all, in many ways our arguments are complementary, since Rawlings also does not believe that *prophasis* in our passage means a necessary cause according to our "modern scientific conception."²⁷ However, I have reservations about his methodology and his ultimate conclusion, namely, that *prophasis* in 1.23.6 is a precondition, "an objective statement of fact."²⁸ There may indeed be etymological ambiguity concerning *prophasis*, but this ambiguity in no way requires that *prophasis*, as used by Thucydides, to have two meanings that correspond to its two possible derivations. Language is far too flexible to be so cut up. Moreover, Rawlings himself acknowledges the relative scarcity of evidence and notes that though Thucydides was clearly familiar with the Hippocratic medical tradition, he was in no way bound to it.²⁹ In appealing to the Hippocratic corpus and holding on to a type of etymological determinism, Rawlings goes to some lengths to make Thucydides into a scientific historian. After all, the distinction between *prophasis* as necessary cause and objective precondition is a narrow one, and certainly an objective precondition does not have the same self-fulfilling expansive structure that we have shown the *prophasis* in 1.23.6 has. At the same time, Rawlings does *not* think about the convergence of the two roots of *prophasis* – both *prophainō* and *prophēmi* (what Rawlings will call "*prophasis* I" and "*prophasis* II," respectively) – that is, "to put forward an appearance" and "to put forward a saying." Perhaps *prophasis* is not a conflation that needs to be disentangled but a profound meditation on the sameness of these two activities. To say is to put forward a phenomenon and vice versa. Our reading of 1.23.6 and of the work that follows suggests that Thucydides himself was open to thinking about *prophasis* in this way.

Meanwhile, Rawlings must do considerable violence to the key passage, violence that is unnecessary. The meaning of what Rawlings calls *prophasis* I is a justification, although one that is often specious. *Prophasis* I tends to appear in speeches since it accounts for the actors' own behavior,³⁰ and in our passage Thucydides suggests that this *prophasis* was indeed spoken. Rawlings, however, takes our instance of *prophasis* to be that of *prophasis* II, and this sort of *prophasis* represents the author's objective opinion (based on Rawlings's reading of the Hippocratics, particularly *Ancient Medicine*).³¹ To reach this conclusion, Rawlings makes a number of dubious assumptions. First, he emphasizes *aphanestatēn*, "least

manifest,” in order to relate this appearance of *prophasis* with its derivation from *prophainō*. In so doing, he leaves out the “in logos,” which suggests a connection with *prophēmi*. Second, though Rawlings does note that this *prophasis* is composed of the various subjective charges made by the two sides (what Rawlings calls *aitiai*), he does not then conclude that this *prophasis* must also be “subjective.”³² Third, Rawlings takes the “I believe,” Thucydides’s authorial intrusion, as strengthening this claim’s objectivity rather than an affirming its subjectivity, or better, its appropriateness from a particular perspective. Fourth, to account for the superlative adjective *alethestatēn* (“most *aletheia*”) modifying *prophasis* (i.e., Rawlings asks how a motive can be most true),³³ Rawlings explains that here Thucydides is creating a new causal category, that of precondition (namely, *prophasis* II).³⁴ Thus, according to Rawlings, we have four separate sorts of causes in Thucydides: *aitia* (charge made), *aition* (necessary cause), *prophasis* (precipitant), and truest *prophasis* (precondition). Even accepting this scheme as intelligible, Rawlings has, at the very least, not explained why the adjective is in the superlative, much less why a simpler answer cannot be found through, among other things, not translating *aletheia* as “true.” Lastly, Rawlings seems to believe that the sentence that follows the phrase “most revealing pretext” has only one reading,³⁵ while it actually has many (this point goes more generally for the manner in which Rawlings categorizes the remaining narrative concerning events before the war). If there is more than one reading, then it becomes much harder to understand what the objective precondition is supposed to be.

Despite its limitations, Rawlings’s study of *prophasis* is important, and achieving an apodictic conclusion on a translation of *prophasis* is not as interesting as considering the genealogy of all approaches to Thucydides that struggle to find his underlying theory of historical causality. For this I turn briefly to an illuminating article by Vegetti. According to Vegetti, there is only one fifth century B.C. Hippocratic text (*Ancient Medicine*) that discusses what I have labeled “mechanical causality,” which is the belief that causes can be individuated as necessarily causing unique effects.³⁶ Thus, even if Thucydides was influenced by the Hippocratic doctors (and he surely was), there is only one precedent for *prophasis* or *aition* being understood in terms of mechanical causality. Here is how Vegetti sums up his argument:

In conclusion, my study has shown that it is not the case, as has been proposed, that the transition from the words *aitia/aitios* to the adjectival substantive *to aition* signifies a growth in conceptual generalization. The idea was probably suggested because of Stoic terminology, but in fact Thucydides, *Ancient Medicine*, and

Aristotle himself all use the substantive and the adjective without any difference of meaning.

There is a more important philosophical point. Aristotle did not completely follow *Ancient Medicine's* rigorous definition of causality. His own definition of the "types of causality" in *Physics* II, in *Metaphysics* V, and elsewhere, looks back to the entire elaborations of the fifth century and makes from their uncertainties an element that is rich and conceptually complex. The answer to the question "why," in his view, should not be limited to giving the productive or efficient cause along the lines adopted by the theory of *Ancient Medicine* and as the Stoics later thought. His use of the idea of "end" or "goal" in causal explanation (as already in Plato's *Phaedo*) restores the political context of "motives" and "reasons" that had been the property of fifth century thought and that *Ancient Medicine*, in its drastically rigorous way, seems to have dismissed as a piece of foolishness.³⁷

In other words, Thucydides generally reflects the ideas of his time, just as Rawlings claims, but Rawlings pushes too hard on the parallels between Thucydides's text and what appears to have been an outlier. In Thucydides's time, even the doctors were not thinking in terms of mechanical causality, and even Aristotle would not do so almost a century later. It is not clear to me what Vegetti makes of these competing notions of causality. There can be no doubt that mechanical causality is a powerful idea, one that can have awesome effects on the world and may even be true of some events/processes. But at the same time, we notice that the more ancient approach to causality is grounded on and in human activities such as blaming, reasoning, and arguing. Thucydides's weaving of the most revealing *prophasis* into his *History* is thus an accomplishment worth pondering as a demonstration of how to do history without relying on a mechanical notion of causality.

Compulsion (*Ananke*)

Another vector of dubious interpretation surrounds the issue of *ananke*, necessity. Once again, it is odd that this term should pose such a challenge. After all, Thucydides does not use the abstract form of *ananke* (namely, *ananke*) in the following key passage:

I have first set forth the charges and differences *why* they dissolved [the peace], lest someone ever seek from what such a war happened to the Hellenes. For the *most revealing pretext*, though the one least manifest in logos, the Athenians, I believe, growing great and providing fear to the Lacedaimonians, compelled (*anankein*) into warring.

It is this last part, "the Athenians, I believe, growing great and providing fear to the Lacedaimonians, compelled (*anankein*) into warring," which

is often taken (e.g., by Rawlings) as presenting the necessary cause of the war.

As noted in the text, there are various possible readings of this passage and particularly the use of the verbal form of the verb “to compel” (actually, the aorist infinitive). According to the grammar of the sentence, there are several possible agents who compelled and objects that were compelled. The general trend, which is not reflected in my translation, is to parse the grammar so that a strong argument about necessity is being made. Hence Crawley’s translation:

The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable.

It is not entirely clear which of the various expedients Crawley is appealing to, and I want briefly to demonstrate why all attempts to find historical necessity here do needless violence to a difficult passage that makes perfectly good sense.

The first reading understands a “the,” thus creating the verbal noun “the compelling.” Thus the Athenians causing fear to the Spartans was a compulsion into war. Understanding a “the” is generally an accepted way to understand many of Thucydides’s sentences,³⁸ but in this case the addition is especially significant and unfortunate because it makes the verb “to compel” into a noun. As Allison notes, Thucydides is prone to turn verbs into nouns, and so it is striking that at this key moment Thucydides has done the opposite (so much for a consistent strategy of semantic ascent!). Indeed, both Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Scholion gloss this passage using the more familiar noun phrase, namely, “according to necessity.”³⁹ And this is not the only odd reversal in this sentence. Instead of using *polemos* (“war”), as he does in the previous sentence, now Thucydides makes the verb *polemein* (“to war”) into a noun, *to polemein* (“the warring”). In the larger context of the war, this reading, which implies that the Spartans were the ones who started the war, has merit because the Spartans do arguably start the war and they later feel that they were punished for this.⁴⁰

One can also understand the word “them.” This is also a common addition since pronouns will often fall out if the referent is nearby. This reading keeps *anankein* a verb, but only at the expense of making the Athenians into the aggressors, and so now it is the Athenians growing great that compels *them* (the fearing Spartans) into war. Athenian power is indeed the new force that Thucydides feels needs to be explained.⁴¹ Still, this seems inconsistent with the events that Thucydides narrates as leading

to war since the Athenians do not act particularly aggressively, nor do the Spartans seem especially fearful. Of course, Thucydides's few authorial interventions are often in tension with the very events he narrates.⁴² Still, one may be uncomfortable about a problematic addition to such a central, and seemingly deliberately crafted, sentence. Thus Noonan, for one, suggests that the "them" here refers not just to the Athenians, but to the Greeks in general,⁴³ and so the joint activities of the Athenians and Spartans compelled the Greeks into war, which is certainly a plausible reading.

Martin Ostwald argues that, without any additions, we read the sentence as saying that both the Athenians and the Spartans (as a result of their growing and fearing) made war necessary.⁴⁴ Ostwald notes that this reading puts the emphasis on the verb as a verb (a point I wholly agree with). It is no longer Athenians forcing Spartans, but somehow their behavior in conjunction creating a situation in which war could not be avoided (it is this last part I am suspicious of). Ostwald dutifully strives to understand further what Thucydides means by *anankein* (the verb) and *ananke* (the noun). Interestingly, he does not find any discussion of *ananke* per se, but rather a great deal of verbal use, especially in speeches (41 percent of all appearances are in speeches).⁴⁵ Despite the prevalence of *ananke* (and verbal forms) within speeches, Ostwald himself does not feel compelled to conclude that *ananke* as an abstraction is itself being avoided, perhaps even questioned. Thucydides's text generally contains opposing speeches, and the claims about what is compelling are often inconsistent with one another. Claims about *ananke* are further complicated by their relation with events the text narrates because a speaker's claims about compulsion may well prove to be wrong.

Ostwald does note that this verb (as well as the noun *ananke*) is a key word in the oft-repeated claim that "it is necessary for the strong to rule the weak."⁴⁶ This claim is familiar from the work of Strauss and followers of Strauss (e.g., Clifford Orwin), who labels it the "Athenian Thesis" because of its exclusive appearance in the speeches of Athenians (with the notable exception of the Syracusan Hermocrates).⁴⁷ Ostwald goes so far as to acknowledge that *ananke* may hold only from a certain perspective, but he does not seem to recognize that this is the case for *everyone's* beliefs about *ananke*. Thucydides recognizes that appealing to necessity is a rhetorical trope, not an intimation of a cosmic order. Thucydides even explicitly demonstrates the use of the appeal to necessity. In Book Seven, Thucydides tells us that the Corcyreans were the only Dorians to join in

the Athenian attack on Syracuse – another Dorian city. The Corcyreans claim that they acted

[...] under *ananke* [compulsion], plausibly (ἐϋπρεπούς [note all the echoes of Thucydides 6.6.1]), but they no less desired [to follow] because of their hatred of the Corinthians.⁴⁸

Thucydides here in his own voice is making the point that the appeal to *ananke* can be quite appropriate; it is a sound reason for attacking one's kinsmen. Of course, this is not the *only* reason, but it is hardly clear which reason takes priority or even what priority would mean here (i.e., how much less is “no less”?).

The use of the transitive verb (versus *ananke*, as in the previous passage), namely, *anankein*, without a clear subject or object, ought to attract our attention in 1.23.6. As Schreckenberg argues at great length, this verb maintains its association with actual physical binding right through our period and beyond.⁴⁹ If this were a passage in which Thucydides wanted to emphasize the connection with contemporary treatments of *ananke* in a more abstract sense, then, following Noonan, all he had to do was use the more ordinary phrase “according to necessity.”⁵⁰

We now arrive at the reading of this sentence that I myself prefer more and more; I offer this not because it invalidates all other readings, but because, especially given all of the other work we have done on the Archaeology, it is the most revealing and actually requires less exegetical violence. Thucydides 1.23.6 could be read as implying that the most revealing pretext forced the Athenians to grow (i.e., the *prophasis* is the subject of “to compel” and the Athenians are its direct object), and as they grew they caused the Spartans to fear – hence the war even without the narration of especially provocative events in the years right before the war. This reading is also consistent with the Athenian Thesis that the strong must rule or be destroyed. Whatever the merits of the thesis, the Athenians regularly insist that they had no choice but to assume their empire and that the Spartans are wrong for blaming them for the enmity their empire has aroused. One could even claim that the most revealing pretext forced the Athenians to grow *and* the Spartans to fear (i.e., both sides are the direct object of “to compel”). This additional twist is supported by the considerable space given to Spartan deliberations concerning going to war. These deliberations culminate not in King Archidamus's prescient and clever speech (which also assumes the inevitability of war), but in Sthenelaidas's direct demagogic appeal to anger and fear.⁵¹ Thus

the mode of arguing itself has power (i.e., the appeal to fear), even if this most compelling argument is operating behind the scenes.⁵²

The biggest problem with this reading is that the *prophasis* is rather far away from the verb. In Thucydides this objection is hardly fatal, especially because the most revealing *prophasis*, insofar as it is far away, is also at the beginning and hence the most emphatic part of the sentence (and we know it is one sentence from the placement of the final verb). This emphasis is only heightened by the apparently paradoxical juxtaposition of *aletheia* and *prophasis*. Moreover, both the immediate and general contexts point to the subject matter here being speech and not historical law of some sort. Finally, we have already noted that the use of the verb here is exceptional; it thus seems to solicit appropriate subjects and objects, even from a distance.

Yet, whatever the merit of the particular reading offered here, the key point is that there is no abstract notion of necessity in Thucydides; it is not to be found in the Archaeology, nor is it to be found in the speeches and narrative that follow. Claims about compulsion are important because they play a large role in binding the text together, but these claims bind precisely because they are malleable. It is because they emerge from a particular rhetorical context that necessity claims can be profitably revisited, and it is this back-turning interpretive movement that discloses a new world.

Kind (*Toioutos*)

It could be objected that all of this insistence on the ambivalence, indeed the play, of the text is misplaced because Thucydides believes that there are truths about human nature that he has successfully articulated in order for future thinkers to be able to predict future events. And yet, in the key passage that such a view depends upon⁵³ there is no truth, no human nature, and no belief in the exact repetition of events. Instead this is an instance of Thucydides addressing his audience of those who wish to see and aiming to provide clarity (not truth) “of the things that have happened and will happen once again as such or similarly to such, according to the human.” There is no doubt that, as Edmunds notes,⁵⁴ Thucydides attempts to look at events from a broader perspective than that of the participants themselves, and this is part of what it means to achieve clarity, but there is a difference between striving for a broader perspective and presenting a universal one, indeed even conceiving of a universal perspective as intelligible at all. In 1.23.5 Thucydides states

that he has composed the various causes of the war for someone who wishes to *inquire* into them. Throughout his *Archaeology*, Thucydides has emphasized that one difference between his work and that of others is that his inquiry achieves *aletheia* through toil.⁵⁵ Thucydides's *History* is not a work for one who wants to gaze on the truth, but for one who is willing to pursue a difficult and uncertain inquiry into a terrible conflict; it is a work for someone willing to reappropriate that which reveals itself in sentence after sentence. Providing kinds is a precondition for this revelation because how else to recognize what it is that is before one? It is thus definitely worthwhile to argue about the relative importance of the causes of this war within Thucydides's text and to use the few other sources on the war that we have. What is uncanny about 1.23.6 and Thucydides's entire *Archaeology* is that this debate can never end, which is essential to world disclosure, and what this appendix focused on are the textual misunderstandings suggesting that the persistence of these debates instead demonstrates that we have not yet arrived at the one true understanding of the text.

Appendix II

Pretragic History of *Deinon*

Introduction

The pretragic history of the word *deinon* is the rich, and surprising, inheritance that the tragedians and Thucydides deploy to make subtle arguments about the human. It is surprising because, though it may be generally granted that the *deinon* is central to tragedy, it is not seen as particularly important in Homer, much less a term that already describes the uncanny as it relates to logos. In order to support these assertions and to provide still more refinement and content to the argument, this appendix discusses additional issues relating to *deinon*, including the standard history of the term, and further develops some of the passages discussed in the text, as well as other key passages.

Etymology and History of Interpretation

There are some aspects of the history of the word *deinon* that are uncontroversial. For instance, *deinon* is derived from the root δε and the suffix νο.¹ It is also well known that the word *deinon* is central to tragedy, particularly Sophoclean tragedy, and in some way refers to the features of the human that make tragedy possible. Finally, certainly by the third century B.C., the adjective *deinotes* (having the characteristic of being *deinon*) had become a description for a particular type of public speech, namely, the vehement, powerful style.²

There is also a standard story about the progression of *deinon*. In Homer *deinon* always means “terrible or powerful,”³ and *deinon* becomes “uncanny” only in tragedy, particularly in Sophocles. Logos becomes

deinon only in the context of the Sophists. Specifically, according to Voit, *logos* is *deinos* because it can be applied to any end successfully.⁴ Schlesinger, explicitly following Aristotle's discussion of *deinotes* in Book 6, Chapter 12 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, makes a similar point. He claims that *deinon* represents a power, an ability (*Fähigkeit*), to act for good or ill.⁵ Schlesinger feels that understanding the role of *deinotes* in Aristotle allows one to understand better the role of *deinon* in Sophocles; humans are *deinon* because they sometimes achieve goodness, sometimes evil.⁶

This smooth progression is not true to the texts. *Deinon* already has traces of the uncanny in Homer and is already associated with *logos* in Homer. This is not to minimize the contribution of the Sophists or Sophocles to thinking about the *deinon*; it is only to say that their contributions are to an ongoing discussion and that this is a discussion that Thucydides will join. The thinking about *deinon* that occurs in the fifth century B.C. is remarkable, but it is remarkable precisely because it makes aspects of the human situation explicit that are already implicit in the tradition. Put another way, viewing the development of *deinon* as a progression relies upon a notion of time as marching forward in a series of discrete units, that is, first *deinon* means this, now that, and so on. Our treatment of this word is a further demonstration of the poverty of such a compartmental view of the meaning of a word through time, as well as, relatedly, the poverty of such a perspective on time.

The root δει, from which *deinon*, as well as the noun δέος and the verb δέιδω are derived, is associated with "dread." According to Ammonius (cited in Liddell, Scott, and Jones' *Lexicon*), the difference between *deos* and *phobos* is one of duration. One *fears* (*phobos*) something immediate, but one *dreads* something that is in some way capable of becoming fearful. A *dei-ma* is that thing which is dreaded.⁷ Finally, following Smyth, the suffix -vo (sometimes) denotes what "*may, can, or must be done.*"⁸ *Deinon*, then, at first glance, can be translated as "dreadable." And someone who has *deinotes* has the quality of being dreadful.

It is fruitful to interpret a word's etymology as posing a question because it allows a word to generate multiple meanings without presupposing a series of discrete rules that will underwrite each of these new meanings. Further, by thinking of etymology as posing a question, one is not committed to some form of etymological determinism (i.e., a form of the genetic fallacy). The persistent and thoughtful pressing of a question can provide answers not clearly related to the word's root. Thus I think that one can plausibly say that the word *deinon* poses a question: what is

particularly appropriate to dread? To this question, already in Homer, we find a family of answers. Gods are dreadful, but so are natural forces, humans, situations, and, most strikingly, words.

Homer and Hesiod

Homer emphasizes the perspectival and perceptual elements of *deinon*. Sounds and sights, particularly but not exclusively those emanating from the gods, are *deinon*. Thus Zeus's thunder and Strife's cry are *deinon*, but so are the cries made by fighting humans and, quite often, the plumed helmets of the combatants.⁹ In the *Odyssey*, the sea and the waves are *deinon*, as are both Scylla and Charybdis.¹⁰ Perhaps the two most striking examples of the question of perspective involve Achilles, the only *deinon* man in the *Iliad* (according to Patroklos, who should know).¹¹ When confronted with the new armor made by Hephaistos, the other Myrmidons tremble in fear, but the sight of the arms only rekindles Achilles's anger and he looks in a *deinon* manner, as if his looks were flame.¹² At *Iliad*. 24.479, Priam kisses Achilles's *deinon* hands, hands that are surely terrible, but are *deinon* for Priam because those are also the hands that have killed his sons.

There are also uses of *deinon* that are better understood as "strange" rather than "terrible." No doubt Charybdis is something to be dreaded for her power, but this does not seem to be why Poseidon says that it is *deinon* that the Trojans are now attacking the Greek ships.¹³ It is a *thauma*, a wonder, that Poseidon *sees* precisely because the Trojans had previously not even ventured outside of their walls. Even more extraordinary, the portent at Aulis is *deinon*, something to be marveled at.¹⁴ In neither of these cases is *deinon* describing a particularly powerful thing, but rather a situation that is somehow unexpected and that may well end up out of control. And, in fact, both odd situations will get out of control (from the perspective of the participants) and are part of a larger drama that feeds on itself behind the backs of the participants.

There are also uses of *deinon* in connection with the maintenance of boundaries. As discussed in the text, when Patroklos attempts to storm Troy four times, the fourth time Apollo, the *deinon* god who will kill Patroklos, cries to Patroklos in a *deinon* way.¹⁵ It is important both that Apollo must make a sound, must address Patroklos directly to remind him who he is, and that the manner of such boundary maintenance is *deinon*. Apollo performs the same service against Diomedes, who is fighting the gods.¹⁶ Indeed, Zeus must cast a *deinon* flame to keep Diomedes

in bounds; this is a message that Nestor immediately grasps and explains to Diomedes.¹⁷

Deinon is a word for events that maintain boundaries, and even and especially events that maintain a boundary through crossing it. Words, whether or not they emanate from a god, operate through setting limits by crossing them. Appropriately, then, already in the *Odyssey*, we have human speech described as *deinon*. First, Euryalus apologizes to Odysseus lest he has spoken a *deinon* word.¹⁸ Interpreted through Sophocles, such a word is something excessive, which can begin a chain of destruction. Agamemnon and Ajax let loose such words. Yet we have already seen in the *Iliad* that *deinon* can refer to something strange, something dreadful, precisely because one does not know where this excessive chain will lead one.

Importantly, there is also even the ironic use of the notion of a *deinon* word in connection with prophecy in *Odyssey* 21.169. Leiodes has just predicted the death of the suitors, and Antinous labels such words *deinon*. Antinous reasons that just because Leiodes cannot string the bow does not mean that one of the other princes cannot. And so, even from Antinous's perspective, this word is *deinon* not because it is directly overpowering, but because it is strange that such a wise seer could say such a foolish thing. Yet the irony is that this word is *deinon* because it is strange how a word can be so true and yet misunderstood (even Leiodes sits back down and remains to be killed).

Finally, there is the matter of both Calypso and Circe being described as *deina* and *audēis* – “of human speech.”¹⁹ Clay observes that this type of speech describes recognizably human sounds;²⁰ this epithet signals the lower divine status of these goddesses and their greater humanity (in contrast to Athena, who must take on human speech and form as Mentor).²¹ How are we to interpret the juxtaposition of *deina* and *audēis*?

Following Michael Nagler, we should begin by noting that this phrase is itself liminal, marking “the boundaries between episodes of substantially similar thematic value.”²² Moreover, this phrase is a result of a “common poetic and mythological code in which ‘voice’ is a sign of ontological class or status.”²³ More specifically, the speech that these goddesses (and others, such as Teiresias and the Sirens) use is not merely communicative, but a form of power.²⁴

What is especially *deinon* about the power of Circe and Calypso is their relationship to eros,²⁵ which is surely a paradigmatic example of the uncanny in human life. In fact, despite the absence of social relations in

Thucydides, we have already seen that the *deinon* story of poleis at war is not told without eros having a central role. As Nagler puts it:

Deine, “potent,” suits [Circe and Calypso] uncommonly well because such goddesses are powerful for good or for ill – depending on one’s relationship to them.²⁶

These goddesses, with their human-like speech, appearance, and passion, can deprive one of one’s humanity or usher one back towards one’s community. As Penelope’s testing of Odysseus with the tree bedpost illustrates, reading signs correctly is at the heart of a human community.²⁷ Going a little beyond Nagler here, one can say that goddesses who symbolize the doubleness of signs are a constant danger to the community, perhaps even “the eternal irony of the community.”²⁸

In Hesiod, as in Homer, gods and goddesses, such as Apollo, are *deinon*.²⁹ But there are other instances in which Hesiod would seem to be critically engaging with his Homeric heritage, as he does generally.³⁰ The cap that makes Perseus invisible is *deinon*, and there are snakes so *deinon* that they are not to be spoken of.³¹ The *deinon* heads of the monster Typhoeus, burned by Zeus, emitted every kind of unspeakable sound, so that the gods could understand it only sometimes.³² Significantly, the Furies do not ever cease their *deinon* anger against the one who has missed the mark (*hamartanein*) until she has paid the penalty.³³ This anger is *deinon* because, unlike human anger, it is not limited, especially by time. Furthermore, this unlimited anger is aroused by the very activity that a limited creature cannot avoid, namely, error.

Most striking in Hesiod is the expansion of the *deinon* directly into the realm of the uniquely human. Within five lines, the neuter *deinon* is used to describe three situations – dying at sea, losing one’s goods at sea, and overloading one’s wagon so that one breaks its axle³⁴ – and the latter two are explicitly compared. These things have in common that they are all quintessentially human possibilities. They are what humans are, which is to say, creatures who cross boundaries, who push limits. Yet all such liminal activities are inherently dangerous; one trades to begin with only because of the difficulty and the danger. To drown,³⁵ to hit a storm, to overload is to succumb to the very threat that is the precondition for the whole endeavor. What then is the lesson that Hesiod draws?

Keep the measure (*metron*). The appropriate (*kairos*) in all cases is the best.³⁶

Advice vacuous and profound; Hesiod does not tell us how much is too much, but he does note that the central challenge for a human is to measure rightly. And this is why the Saying of mortals is *deinon*:

So do and avoid the *deinon* Saying of mortals.
 For bad Saying is stirred lightly and easily raised,
 but it is cruel to bear and hard to be rid of.
 Saying is never wholly destroyed, if many people say something.
 Even she [i.e., Saying] is in some ways a God.³⁷

Hesiod is very clear as to what he is referring to here. It is the talk of *mortals*, not of gods; it is easy to stir up but hard to bear; it is not under the control of any one human, however powerful; thus human Saying is in some way divine, much like that of Circe and Calypso.

Conclusion

The repeated association of *deinon* with logos in Homer and Hesiod is remarkable and perhaps unexpected, especially because we have found that *deinon* already has connotations of the uncanny. Though it may be granted that these connections are there, especially when thought backward, it may be wondered, nevertheless, *why* they are there. In the age of Gorgias and Cleon we may recognize the poignancy of the connection between *deinos* and logos, but what was the question posed by logos for the great epic poets?

A brief answer can be offered thanks to Detienne and his influential argument in *The Masters of Truth in Ancient Greece*. According to Detienne, the poets are entrusted by the Muses, the daughters of Memory, with power to grant *kleos* ("fame," "renown") or *lethe* ("oblivion"). We should note that both fame and oblivion are temporal notions experienced through the medium of logos.³⁸ In the aristocratic world that predated currency and democracy, the power a poet could bestow was craved and feared. Notoriously, the Muses can inspire the poets with seeming truth rather than that actually revealed to mortals (*aletheia*).³⁹ Detienne emphasizes that the speech of the poet is efficacious; the logos of the poets is *kleos*.⁴⁰ One can even add a further Heideggerian twist:⁴¹ Heidegger notes that the seer sees not just what is, has been, and will be, but also what has always already been seen. It is this ability to see that is so extraordinary.⁴² In such a world of efficacious logos, we find recognition that logos is something worthy of dread.

In this regard, it is worth ending with consideration of an instructive fragment from Simonides, a fragment that bridges the not-so-great divide between the epic poets and the tragedians. This piece is about Danae, set out to sea in a chest with her child, Perseus. She laments her fate as she is tossed about in the chest but notes how her child sleeps. And then she says:

If the *deinon* were *deinon* to you,
then towards my words (*rhemata*)
you would turn your subtle ear.⁴³

This passage is extraordinary first of all because of its use of the neuter *deinon* to delimit the disastrous space, indeed the tragic space, Danae now occupies – one of “evil without limit” we are told two lines later (*ametrōn kakon*), characterized partially as a space where logos is not efficacious. Moreover, the *deinon* here, as in Homer, is clearly a matter of perspective. Will that which is *deinon* be recognized? If it is, it will occur through paying attention to words. One could perhaps glean the following moral from this passage: if one wished to make the *deinon* manifest, to make another incline his ear to the *deinon*, then it would be a matter of creating the proper perspective.⁴⁴

Appendix III

Wittgenstein on Fly-Bottles, Aspect Seeing, and History

Introduction

This book would have been unduly cumbersome if it spent too much time on the underlying philosophical arguments as the main argument about Thucydides's text proceeded. This was actually more than a logistical hurdle, as there seems to be no reason to delve into the finer points of aspect seeing and world creation if it were not first established that these are important to understanding Thucydides's text. And so, I began with some provisional philosophical arguments, sketches really, and postponed more detailed discussion to the appendixes. Of course, the appendixes can hardly do justice to the philosophical positions I am relying upon, but, as in my discussion of the *deinon* in tragedy, I do hope that the discussions that follow at least move my position out of the domain of mere hand waving and place them in the context of an important tradition. This appendix will address my debt to Wittgenstein, especially as regards aspect seeing and history.

It should be noted at the outset that Ludwig Wittgenstein published only one book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, with which he was later dissatisfied. Parts of a second work, the *Philosophical Investigations*, were apparently getting close to being presentable to his mind, but the work was not published in Wittgenstein's lifetime.¹ Thus all of the many works of Wittgenstein other than the *Tractatus* are collaborative efforts between Wittgenstein and his editors – generally former students. Despite the joint authorship, there are definite internal hints as to how the bulk of Wittgenstein's work, especially the famous later work, which consists primarily of short aphoristic sayings, is to be approached. Furthermore, there is a

sense in which Wittgenstein's intentions, like those of Thucydides, have been superseded; Wittgenstein's works are what they are, as is the dramatic effect that these works have had, which is itself something to be marveled at.

According to the later Wittgenstein (we will return to the earlier Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* in a moment), there are no philosophical problems: a philosopher works upon a loom with no thread.² It is tempting to say that the philosopher has forgotten what looms are for in the real world – if only she would return, she would understand. Yet the problem with the empty loom is that it is doing no work, even as it appears that it is. In philosophy the engine of language is idle;³ there are all manner of games philosophers could be playing, indeed seem to be playing, but are not playing. Philosophical flies are trapped in fly-bottles by unsuitable expressions because the rules of our language games take us to places we do not expect.⁴ Aside from the famous confusions involving ostensive definition, rule following, and private language, Wittgenstein offers many other examples of language leading us to expressions that are only apparently meaningful (and thus into the fly-bottle). Such expressions appear to be connected to language games that we play, to questions that we ask, but in fact they are not:⁵

It was just 5 o'clock on the sun.

The stove is in pain.⁶

And, most strikingly,

Either such an image is in his mind, or it is not; there is no third possibility!⁷

All of this serves to make several points. First, there is no systematic philosophy of the late Wittgenstein. There is instead preserved a series of incredibly suggestive passages that often, but not always, creates a coherent therapy for philosophical puzzles, particularly the puzzles of modern philosophy. In this sense, turning to Wittgenstein to clarify specific issues in the text of Thucydides that I believe has been obscured by modern philosophical thinking is entirely appropriate. It is important at the outset to discard Wittgenstein as somehow the apostle of the ordinary, that somehow philosophical problems are *easily* dissolved. It is not easy at all to see what has become obvious to us.⁸

Aspect Seeing

We have already touched upon the notion of aspect seeing as explaining the visual metaphors Thucydides uses in his *Archaeology*. Specifically, it

was noted that Thucydides is allowing the wise to see kinds in connection with one another, and in so doing is creating a world. It was noted then that the type of seeing involved is not a matter of what we would consider ordinary visual perception, but what then exactly is it? Aspect seeing is another rich topic with an academic life of its own, but Wittgenstein's treatment is extensive, profound, and relevant, and this is the treatment we will rely upon.

For Wittgenstein, recognizing the face of an old friend in the face of a seeming stranger is an exemplar of aspect seeing, as is the famous duck-rabbit drawing. These exemplars demonstrate that aspect seeing, as a family of phenomena, is a type of seeing that falls somewhere between ordinary seeing (e.g., seeing a color) and interpretation (i.e., some type of intellectual process).⁹ As such an intermediate phenomenon, aspect seeing cannot be accounted for in terms of inner pictures or processes.¹⁰ Instead of relating the object of vision within, aspect seeing relates it without, to other objects, for instance to other ducks.¹¹ In relating to these other objects, aspect seeing tends to be an experience of seeing objects as wholes, that is, as the kinds of things that they are.¹²

For Wittgenstein, aspect seeing is a solution to a particular family of problems revolving around our inability to imagine meaning as being anything but a mental event. For instance, we imagine meaning as an internal rule guiding us internally, like an internal railroad track.¹³ To the extent that this is neither true phenomenologically (i.e., this is not what we do)¹⁴ nor coherent logically (hence Wittgenstein's famous rule-following skepticism), we need another image if we are to explain the reality of meaning, and this is what aspect seeing provides. We do see the old face in the new, but this does not require that any internal image of the face be changed; this alternative way of seeing makes this point so well precisely because, by definition, in such a case there would be nothing in the internal picture to change. It is the same face after all.

Aspect Seeing and History

With the notion of aspect seeing at least loosely sketched, we can now discuss its connection with history. Wittgenstein, in the preface to the posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations*, offers the following tip about reading the book:

Then [upon rereading the *Tractatus*] it suddenly appeared to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new together: that the proper illumination

could only be maintained through the opposition and upon the background of my old way of thinking.

This is technical advice, and not only because Wittgenstein's first book, the *Tractatus*, is so difficult and not obviously relevant to every discussion in the *Philosophical Investigations*, but also because Wittgenstein is here describing the dawning of an aspect. That is to say, *now* Wittgenstein sees the proper manner of publishing his work, namely, together with the old so that a tension between them is maintained – a tension that allows for new insights of a particular type. Paradoxically, then, the reader cannot grasp the significance of the preface's appeal to aspect seeing until she has read the book it introduces, not to mention the earlier book.¹⁵ Rereading is clearly a prerequisite.

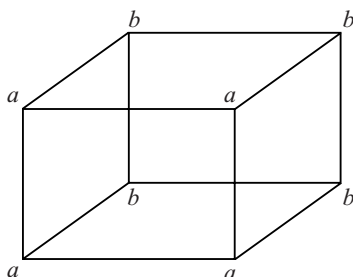
If one is to reread the *Philosophical Investigations* once one understands the import of aspect seeing against the background of the *Tractatus*, which one must always already have reread, then history is implicated in how one reads the *Philosophical Investigations*. There is no such advice in the preface to the *Tractatus*; noting this contrast is itself to follow the method laid out in the preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*. At this point, the reason for this seeming digression should be becoming clear. First, Wittgenstein, like Thucydides, is prescribing the proper method for reading the book that follows in term of a visual experience that is itself made possible only by reading the book that follows. Second, Wittgenstein, like Thucydides, is creating this experience at least in part through a polemical relationship to the work that necessarily preceded it. Third, all of this wisdom can only be gained through careful rereading. Fourth, though, as we will soon discuss, all of this seeing does implicate a critique of the *Tractatus*'s position; it is hardly decisive. This seeing is decisive, however, for having a sharp debate about the merits of the *Tractatus* position in contrast to that of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

There is a further structural similarity worth noting, which is that in both cases there is a loose, but substantial, isomorphic structure between the forms of Wittgenstein's works and their content, much as we have seen in the work of Thucydides. The *Tractatus*, unlike the *Philosophical Investigations*, stands on its own. There is no methodological help on offer from its preface. This is to say that, when successfully read, the *Tractatus* makes manifest its own irrelevancy, and this is a point that its preface emphasizes. The carefully crafted propositions of the *Tractatus* are to follow one another based on their own inherent, determinate meaning. The crystalline structure of the *Tractatus* points outward to a world of

facts that are so much more refined that the *Tractatus* itself just falls away. What does such a relationship look like? Wittgenstein offers an image:

5.5423 To perceive a complex means to perceive that its constituents are related to one another in such and such a way.

This no doubt also explains why there are two possible ways of seeing the figure.



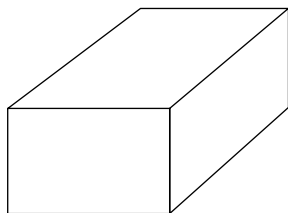
as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts. (If I look in the first place at the corners marked a and only glance at the b's, then the a's appear to be in front, and vice versa).

What the parenthetical statement signals here is that this advice, this way of seeing, is redundant. The cube, helpfully numbered, contains within itself the two ways in which it can be pictured – each mental picture is itself a determinate state of affairs.¹⁶ There are *only* two ways; once one recognizes this, then the comment in parentheses and even the letters drop out.¹⁷ One might even say that one has not understood the cube until one has recognized the redundancy of the parentheses, just as one would say that one cannot ride a bike until one has removed its training wheels. In the *Tractatus*, meaning is determinate,¹⁸ and a proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no.¹⁹ About that which is not determinate, about that which a proposition cannot restrict, what is there to say? Nothing. The propositions of history are either of the sort contained in the parentheses – a pointer to what is obvious – or nonsense. Given the antihistorical stance taken in the preface and the timelessness of the *Tractatus* in general, we may assume that for the early Wittgenstein history is bunk. The Platonic elements of the tractarian project, most especially the carefully laid out and supposedly perfectly lucid (but merely heuristic) hierarchy, should be clear.

The *Philosophical Investigations*, in contrast to the *Tractatus*, is not organized in a rigid hierarchy, and as we have seen, it is historical even before

it properly begins; the book then proceeds to meander around toward no goal in particular – except perhaps the successful treatment of those suffering from bewitching propositions. What is reading the *Philosophical Investigations* like? Here is a cube from the *Philosophical Investigations*, a cube without determinate meaning, a cube enmeshed in history, including the decidedly ahistorical cube in the *Tractatus*:

You could imagine the illustration



appearing in several places in a book, a text-book for instance. In the relevant text something different is in question every time: here a glass cube, there an inverted open box, there a wire frame of that shape, there three boards forming a solid angle. Each time the text supplies the interpretation of the illustration.²⁰

Note that as with the *Philosophical Investigations* itself, there is no suggestion that this cube can stand alone. It requires captioning, and it is understood that no caption is mandated by the cube; moreover, no caption will be the last. This is to say that the captions themselves do not possess determinate meaning any more than does the cube they comment on. Still, a caption is helpful. The preface to the *Philosophical Investigations* is helpful too, but it has not ended interpretation; rather, it has served as a tonic. I would say that the tortured world carved out by Wittgenstein's interpreters is a fairly strong analogy for what Wittgenstein took to be our historical existence. The historical facts do not have one, two, or three possible interpretations stamped upon them. There is no immanent preset limit to the number of interpretations, nor is there any statute of limitations. Indeed, there is nothing to guarantee the integrity of the facts themselves. They are complex and liable to be reorganized and reconnected, thereby fostering an ever greater profusion of interpretations. Seeing all this is messy, not at all determinate:

The concept of seeing makes a tangled impression. Well, it is tangled.²¹

Without question, this is the type of tangle that the *Tractatus* seeks to avoid – only to be entangled itself. Following the method of the preface

to the *Philosophical Investigations*, we have placed two cubes in relation to one another. Both exemplify a stance on meaning and, in particular, whether or not it is determinate. If meaning is determinate, then the role of history (certainly within philosophy) is extremely limited, perhaps nonexistent. The cube of the *Philosophical Investigations*, inasmuch as it is able to illuminate the cube of the *Tractatus* as exemplifying the *Tractatus*, undermines the position of the *Tractatus*. This is to say that the very possibility of taking the cube in the *Tractatus* as possessing meaning that is not immanent to its form is not supposed to be possible. Tilghman makes a similar point;²² the *Tractatus* must make tacit appeal to the possibility of aspect seeing (that is, we can see the cube in two ways) even as aspect seeing is a notion that the *Tractatus* has no “right” to. That is, the tractarian reliance on pictures, especially private inner pictures, leaves it no resources with which to explain aspect seeing.

Wittgenstein’s seemingly innocent introductory insight into his own recent work provides a strong argument against the old. He has seen the old face in the new, and neither can ever be the same. We can go still further. What Wittgenstein has done is to connect his old and new work into one narrative. The open-ended structure of the narrative has made it into a world in which a whole cottage industry of Wittgensteinians have decided to dwell.

Returning to our core philosophical reasons for turning to Wittgenstein, the key point here is that aspect seeing is not an exceptional experience, but rather, along with all of its painful paradoxes, the rule.²³ The more “well-behaved” instances of seeing, such as seeing a color patch, are far more exceptional. If seeing an historical connection is itself a member of the aspect-seeing family, then we have grounds for understanding Wittgenstein’s (and others’) impatience with the procrustean notions of historical “cause” and “effect”²⁴ and for Thucydides’s reliance on visual vocabulary to explain the processes he narrates. If such a thing as a causal chain exists at all, it is wrong to hamstring all historical thought by forcing it to fit into this category. Two historical facts need not relate like two billiard balls, but can relate to one another like background and foreground, like the duck/rabbit, and, most importantly, like the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. The polemical relationship between these two texts is spread out in time and is a matter of time; it is also, of course, a matter of identity, with new readings of Wittgenstein’s later work affecting what he meant earlier – a dynamic that surely would have happened anyway, but is magnified by his own insistence that this is the method by which to approach his work.

Conclusion: Forms of Life and Logos

In reminding us about the central phenomenon of aspect seeing, Wittgenstein is reminding us moderns of a phenomenon that we, but not the ancients, have forgotten. It is we who seem to be irresistibly drawn to the image of our minds as something of an internal movie theater, an image that, though in some important ways helpful, creates riddles that are primarily artifacts of the image, such as: how does anyone know that his various internal pictures match up with those of others? Thucydides is obviously not drawn to this image of self and other, and his paradigm for seeing is aspect seeing; Wittgenstein is helpful in reminding us of that. Relatedly, Thucydides lives in a world of logos, not language. Wittgenstein reminds us of that too. Throughout his later work, including in the crucial passages summing up his rule-following consideration and introducing the private language argument, Wittgenstein introduces the notion of a “form of life,” a notion that is somehow broader than, but substantially inseparable from, “language.”²⁵ Crucially, a form of life, should be seen as natural, insofar as not human made, but not natural insofar as it is not reducible to natural laws that humans can discover.²⁶ Nor are forms of life merely a pragmatic notion that language is merely conventional, developed for our use.²⁷ It is a struggle then to say what forms of life are, and Wittgenstein employs many images, such as a “scaffolding” or an “axis.”²⁸ My suggestion is that with the notion of a form of life, Wittgenstein is trying to remind us of logos in the Heraclitean sense. It is logos that organizes a recognizably human world and, as the precondition of a world in which there can be truth, “is not true, nor yet false.”²⁹

Appendix IV

Heidegger on World and Originary Temporality

Introduction

In many ways, Heidegger cannot be more different from Wittgenstein. Heidegger published a voluminous number of works in his lifetime. Unlike Wittgenstein's, Heidegger's philosophical writings almost always explicitly engage the philosophical tradition, and Heidegger clearly believes that there are proper philosophical problems about which it is the task of philosophers to think. Furthermore, especially in the work under consideration here, *Being and Time*, Heidegger's work is extremely systematic.

Despite the differences, it has become increasingly common to see connections between the two thinkers.¹ The *Philosophical Investigations* and *Being and Time* are the twentieth century's two great attacks on Cartesianism. In both cases, that of Heidegger as well as that of Wittgenstein, much emphasis is placed on the fact that the Cartesian picture of isolated subjects is phenomenologically false, and thus the key is to remind us of what we already know. In the case of Wittgenstein, as we saw, the method used was that of short aphoristic sayings meant to reveal the blind spots our philosophical ideas and jargon have obscured. For Heidegger in *Being and Time*, the task is more ambitious. Heidegger's goal is to redescribe our everyday experience in a manner that is not Cartesian.

From Heidegger's more historical perspective, we are not bound to fall into Cartesianism, as Wittgenstein's more modest therapeutic approach would seem to imply. Not only is Cartesianism not phenomenologically true or philosophically coherent, it is a relatively special perspective on the world, even within Western intellectual history. Aristotle, for instance,

was not a Cartesian and was capable of describing the most complex human phenomena without slipping into the Cartesian fly-bottle and without the aid of Wittgenstein. It is no coincidence that so much of the inspiration for Heidegger's redescription of everyday phenomena in Division I of *Being and Time* emerges from Aristotle.²

Given the magnitude and systematicity of *Being and Time*, it is impossible to treat it adequately in a short appendix. I am aided in my endeavor at abbreviation by the fact that I can refer the reader to excellent resources: Hubert Dreyfus's commentary on Division I of *Being and Time*, *Being-in-the-World* and William Blattner's *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, which is largely a commentary on Division II. In this appendix, I provide an admittedly tendentious outline of the two specific notions in *Being and Time* that are crucial for the argument of this book: "world" and "originary temporality." It will turn out that, as with Wittgenstein, the explanatory power of reading Heidegger, along with Thucydides, does not go in only one direction. To the contrary, our discussion of Thucydides and of tragedy helps to illuminate many aspects of *Being and Time* that otherwise remain obscure.

World

In *Being and Time*, "world" is a defined term at the heart of the book's entire argument.³ As discussed briefly earlier, a world is not a collection of things, but a "space" (a "wherein") in which things matter. To return to our example of the world of the theater, this is not just to say that some people care very dearly about the theater as an art form. It is to make the additional point that a theater is not a heap of stuff: it matters where the curtain is and where the seats are and what color the background is. Worlds are also entwined with certain practices that, once one is initiated into, once just does, and so worlds are where some people can be said to "know their way about" blindly – for example, without discussion about what to do next (say, when the curtain goes up). Worlds are always shared, and not only in the relatively trivial sense that it seems incoherent to describe a world that does not factually include other people. This is to say that worlds are open spaces in which we are absorbed with others who are not "other," and that being cut off from these other people and from the items around us is the exception.

This last point is subtle and is to some extent the most powerful insight of *Being and Time*, and so is worth elaborating on. If one is able to take a step back from the Cartesian assumption that one is an insular mind

traveling about, interacting with things and people through causal chains and analogies of experience, then, according to Heidegger, one should be able to see what a rare (and generally very unpleasant) experience it is ever to be anything like a Cartesian subject. We are not isolated from others, hoping that they understand our pain or in any doubt at all about the functioning of the objects of around us. In fact, it is not even accurate to describe any awareness at all of the objects around us as objects; we just use our pens blindly. When we are aware of the things around us resisting us, then something is wrong. The more they resist, the more wrong things are. When we feel this way about the people around us, then something has gone even more profoundly wrong. The experience of really not being with others, of needing to somehow communicate through analogy, is angst.⁴ We can see the parallels with Wittgenstein's response to the skeptic; even localized doubting, say about whether someone is telling us the truth, is actually pretty rare, and real global doubt extremely rare and verging on madness.

Piotr Hoffman's description of angst on a communal scale ought to remind us of our discussion of *stasis*:

[We] are dealing here with what begins as ordinary conflicts playing themselves out on the stage of ordinary life. But, in the process of those conflicts growing and gathering momentum, the participants go beyond that initial stage. Having begun as social agents acting within the framework of social practices, they now take one last and final step through which they deny and repudiate their own status as members of a social community. This denial, we can see, is not entirely alien to the ordinary conflicts maturing and developing within the public world. Rather, the denial – the repudiation, by man, of his own status as communal being, a member of a public realm – emerges as the term of a trend snowballing *within* the public realm. And so the destruction of the public realm – and of my own identity as determined by that realm – is brought about by a development *not entirely discontinuous* with the public realm itself. The life-and-death struggle takes place, and can be expected to take place, when the bond between men begins to slacken and when their conflicts set them further and further apart.⁵

Because the worlds we live are not propositional and were not argued for, we cannot argue or will ourselves back into them. This is the horror of *stasis*, the loss of *epieikeia*.

Worlds are also inherently temporal, which is another reason they are not a mere collection of things. There is a sense here too in which this is trivially true. We live in time, and so must everything that we do. In a slightly more profound sense, this claim is true because worlds are complex and contradictory, the result of layers of history. This may seem to be a new claim, which in a sense it is, but Heidegger would argue

rather that we could hardly live in a world where things mattered if it were simple and did not admit of different perspectives. In this sense, the “world of the driver” is at the limit of the notion of world because it is so impoverished. One does just drive once one has been initiated, and there is really not enough significance in driving to be able to say, in most instances, that one is dwelling in the world of the driver. The “world of the commuter,” which presupposes a stance of some sort on the issue of driving, is more appropriate, as it by necessity includes reference to careers, lifestyle, political values, local transportation history, and so on.

Yet there is an even deeper sense in which worlds are temporal, and that is that they are inherently directed. Those who dwell in the world of the theater move toward production and commuters move toward work. This notion of directedness also can be derived from the fact that worlds have significance. There is no significance if there is nowhere one is going, or so Heidegger argues. Obviously, this is not the standard notion of temporality, but what Heidegger calls “originary temporality” and what I have further glossed as “tragic temporality.”

Ontological Difference

Heidegger is the first thinker to explicitly consider what he calls the “ontological difference.”⁶ The ontological difference is the difference between being and beings or, roughly, between the way of being of worlds (and those that disclose them) and the inhabitants of worlds. In missing the difference, Heidegger believes that the philosophical tradition has consistently projected its (often correct) analysis of beings onto being itself. We have encountered forms of this argument already. With Wittgenstein, it was his insistence that forms of life enable the true and the false but are not themselves true or false. In the case of Thucydides, it was argued that being initiated into his world, learning to see properly, was a precondition for whether any idea in the text was itself true or useful and that this seeing was not itself true or useful. Heidegger does not attribute this mistake to any kind of malice but primarily to the nature of the phenomenon itself. Worlds only function through being unobtrusive, through letting what is within them appear, seamlessly.

Originary Temporality

Before discussing some of the aspects of originary temporality as discussed by Heidegger in Division II of *Being and Time*, it is important to go

beyond the question of textual exegesis to the philosophical argument that there is such a phenomenon as originary or tragic temporality and that it matters. As we saw, a precondition for describing a world anything like the one we live in is that it have temporality, and not temporality as described by our latest scientific theory or even time as defined by clocks. This is not to say that science does not teach us something about time or that what we use clocks to calculate is not significant. What this is to say is that humans, even scientists and watchmakers, live in worlds, and even if, as is the case today, these worlds are inextricably linked with the counting of time as it is done by clocks, and thus these worlds do presuppose the existence of clocks, the scientists and watchmakers themselves still presuppose the existence of worlds. There is thus a more basic phenomenon common to how humans comport themselves, which should be obvious given the fact that humans lived recognizably human lives without clocks and without science, which is again not to say that science does not discover truths about the world.

It is not entirely in the current intellectual mainstream to speak about human commonalities in this way, but it is important to accept some limits on the possibility of human difference. There are considerable preconditions to even recognizing another human as human, much less another culture as a culture (and would we recognize other humans without cultures?), and these preconditions surely include language and a general comportment to birth and death, status, and survival – in short, living in not just a world, but several. The notion of “comportment” here is more important than what is being comported to, which is to say, again, that humans comport themselves in the context of a world, which is to say within a space that is familiar and significant and does not, in general, require ratiocination. Insisting on these very basic structural similarities is the ground both of honoring difference and seeking to efface it.⁷

Heidegger’s argument then is basically that the success of modern science, which is itself grounded on the reality of what there is, has blinded us to other phenomena that also exist. Heidegger, of course, is not content just to make the claim and then some vague gesture toward the fact that there is a certain directedness to all of our endeavors. In Division II of *Being and Time* we have the phenomenological argument for originary temporality, which amounts to an outline of what it is and how it affects human life as redescribed in Division I.

In Division I, Heidegger maintained that human beings have their lives structured by at least one “for-the-sake-of-which,” which is largely given to them by das Man (henceforth “the one”), which is generally understood

as the society and culture at large.⁸ A for-the-sake-of-which can be a role or social position such as “lawyer” (these terms and examples are from Blattner), and this position organizes one’s other commitments (such as “where do I go to school?”).⁹ Again, Heidegger is introducing these new terms because, as used by him, they do not have the same Cartesian baggage; I do not choose to have a for-the-sake-of-which. Lawyer is not a category we give to ourselves, or even could give. On the contrary, we live in a world replete with such social positions, and these positions come complete with their own requirements (such as passing the bar).

There are lots of obvious temporal aspects to becoming a lawyer. The underlying temporal aspect that Heidegger will label originary is connected to the observation that we must take up social positions *again and again*; for example, passing the bar does not make one a lawyer, nor do one’s own actions shield one from changes in the profession (say, a legal reform that destroys one’s area of specialization). A hummingbird is a hummingbird in terms of both its biological description and the world in which it lives. All human beings are also, by definition, human beings biologically, but the world they live in is not theirs in the same way as it is for hummingbirds. Again, people are expelled from the bar or change careers or the meaning of being a lawyer changes, though no one willed it so. Also, and this is obscured somewhat by the simplicity of the term “social position,” we all have multiple for-the-sakes-of-which that relate to one another in complex and often contradictory ways, such as our contemporary concern about the clash between career and family. As noted previously, the prospect of one’s world(s) receding or colliding is terrifying, but real, and irreducibly human.

Nothing we could do gives us an essential identity, that is, a series of worlds organized around for-the-sakes-of-which that are always stable and in harmony. This leads back to the definition of the human,¹⁰ as defined at the beginning of *Being and Time*, as the being that inquires into itself, a fraught and circular inquiry that can never end.¹¹ Over and over we assume roles and positions that presuppose that we must take them up again with uncertain results. This struggle is originary temporality.

These definitions may seem unduly abstract and these examples unduly pedestrian, and this is where our reading of Thucydides is really very illuminating. For example, the Athenians and the Spartans both remain at risk of losing their identity as saviors of Greece, even though for much of the fifth century B.C. that must have seemed ridiculous. Yet their rivalry with each other, which in many ways was entirely consistent with the cultural norms that governed the entire Greek world, led them

both beyond those norms and to actions that threatened to destroy this cherished part of their identity and indeed the whole Greek world (one thinks here too of Antigone and Creon).

Understanding the uncanny fragility of one's identity in Thucydides allows us to understand the most difficult specific claims that Heidegger makes about originary temporality, namely, that originary temporality is nonsuccessive and is grounded in the future; the future has priority because it can change a past that has not passed.¹² The Athenians can change who they were by what they will do if in their brashness they will ally with the Persians to enslave Greeks as readily as they abandoned their own city to fight the Persians. The Athenians are as unnerved by who they are as their neighbors. They then struggle with their Athenian identity as Athenians, that is, quickly and decisively, affecting who they are even as they are trying just to be who they are.

Being Pericles is also nothing in particular. If one is to have one's measure passed in the Assembly, that is, to seize the *kairos* (the *Augenblick* in the language of *Being and Time*),¹³ then one must be flexible ("to see the *Situation*" in the language of *Being and Time*),¹⁴ as Pericles is, which is not to say that there are not strong continuities, including deployment of the trope of firmness. Yet how Pericles expertly responds will itself form the background for the best responses of others, such as Cleon or Alcibiades, and their responding, say embrace of the empire as tyranny or eroticized love of the power of Athens, can lead to consequences (say the near-massacre at Mytilene or the Syracusan Expedition) that cast doubt on the initial wisdom of Pericles's position, that is, on what everyone thought one knew about the great Athenian statesman. One can say that the profusion of bits of Pericles in other politicians is what just happened to occur in fifth century B.C. Athens over the course of one war and/or that this is just the narrative structure adopted by Thucydides. What is important for our argument is that the movement of this narrative, whatever its correspondence with reality, represents a possibility inherent in every identity, and it is the claim of this book that this extraordinary demonstration of originary temporality is the reason for Thucydides's disclosive power.

Phenomenological Bestiary

As has been my practice throughout the book, in this appendix I have focused on the clear presentation of arguments at the occasional expense of a more detailed discussion of the specialized literature. Nevertheless,

one of the great appeals of Heidegger is his attention to the careful disentangling of distinct phenomena, and I am very indebted to these distinctions. And so, I will sketch some additional distinctions that I found particularly fruitful, especially because, without them, I will not be able to complete even my outline of the phenomenon of originary temporality.

In thinking about the features of a world, the features presented in Chapter 1 all have their origins in *Being and Time*, and it would be accurate to claim that I aspired to simplify and “textualize” (i.e., make applicable to a text) the key features of a world that Heidegger identifies in Division I. This is only an aspiration, however, as the features I list do not perfectly map onto the phenomena discussed by Heidegger, which does ultimately make sense because I am describing the features of a text as a world and not the world as such.

In a world we are generally not confronted by objects, but we seamlessly manipulate tools, such as pens, that are ready-to-hand.¹⁵ A consistent explanatory tool, like the importance of a navy, functions similarly, that is, it functions best and most often when not noticed at all. Such tools are not the exception but the norm, and hence my notions of ubiquity and density, which are the textual presuppositions for the seamless use of explanatory tools. We know our way around the worlds in which we find ourselves (the phenomenon of *befindlichkeit*),¹⁶ usually, and this relates to my notion of familiarity. Familiarity encompasses other phenomena as well, such as comporting ourselves understandingly, know-how as glossed by Dreyfus.¹⁷ The phenomenon here is that of the expertise we show in moving about worlds once they are our own. An initiation into a kind of expertise has also long been associated with Thucydides’s text.

We are also not indifferent to worlds, neither as we find ourselves in them nor as we direct ourselves understandingly, including when we are searching for truth, even scientific truth. This directionality is captured to some extent by my notion of openendedness. Just as one doesn’t achieve one’s for-the-sake-of-which with a particular accomplishment, history does not close with a particular battle. There is also overlap here with the notion of significance; it matters to us *how* well we achieve our ends.

Heidegger’s final holistic notion in Division I for describing how we exist in the world is the notion of care;¹⁸ we are concerned not only with our localized ends, but also with who we are. Care maps most closely with the phenomenon I label significance. Yet Heidegger does not stop with care as the most fundamental description of what kinds of beings we are; he pushes forward to the precondition of care, which he considers to be time, and particularly originary temporality. This is the structure

of this book as well. Heidegger explores the temporal preconditions of caring in a variety of often complex ways, but the basic gist is clear. As we have seen with identity, our existential concern, that is, care, is predicated on a past that has been given to us but is still liable to change because of the future.

Following Blattner, Heidegger distinguishes at least four different modes of temporality. First, there is *disengaged* time, and this is the thematic study of time as an object. Such study is typical of mathematical physics. Second, there is the ordinary interpretation of time:¹⁹ Heidegger is committed to the idea that built into our way of being is a tendency to *misunderstand* ourselves.²⁰ The basic idea here is relatively simple; we notice the various features of our world only when something has gone wrong. In the case of time, one might think about looking at the clock while waiting for a flight to arrive or a class to end. Such a ticking away of homogeneous “nows” is the natural interpretation of time because we notice time only when it is misbehaving and is thus thinglike. Aristotle’s interpretation of time in the *Physics* is paradigmatic for this way of treating time. *World-time* is the time we live in ordinarily and is the elusive time that is obscured when, in response to an interruption, we ponder the nature of time. We comport ourselves toward lunch, dinner, a career, all without any cognitive awareness of time at all, and certainly not time as a series of homogeneous nows.²¹ Finally, there is *originary temporality*, which is, roughly, the time marked by our constantly assuming roles, that is, the type of time appropriate to a creature who must assume roles that can never essentially fit.

Heidegger gives priority to originary temporality, and not only because it is so idiosyncratic to humans and easy to miss; rather, Heidegger assigns originary temporality a certain explanatory priority. This is to say that, without understanding originary temporality, there are many phenomena that cannot be explained. Heidegger lists some features of world-time that he explains through originary temporality. The features in question are “datability,” “spannedness,” “significance” and “publicness.”²² The argument for significance is most succinct. Since significance is provided by our unending assumption of social positions, there can hardly be a significant time outside of these positions. This is to say that “lunchtime” can only matter to us (or even show up at all) against the background of our coping with doing a job, and a comportment toward a job is only possible for a being who cares who she is, and only a being living within originary temporality would care who she is over and over.

After his discussion of originary temporality, Heidegger claims that humans are always already within history and that it is only on the basis of this fact that they engage in explicitly historical activities.²³ Humans are always historical because they are always struggling with who they are in time, though they need not disclose to themselves (or others) that they are so engaged. Yet the possibility of such disclosure is ever present, and my argument is that it was realized by Thucydides.

For the sake of completeness here, I will also detail the Heideggerian phenomenological vocabulary for history, as it is not at all well known. Heidegger calls our being-within-history – *geschehen* – “to happen,” and only because humans are always already happening can they have a history (*Geschichte*). This is more than mere word play if one is willing to grant that my taking a stand on who I am is an event that is qualitatively different from what an animal might do and full of risk (just ask Pentheus). The phenomenon of humans as happening points to a whole other way-of-being, namely, the-no-longer-ready-to-hand. An ancient urn is no-longer-ready-to-hand, that is, no longer seamlessly available to us as a tool (say, in contrast to a Tupperware bowl), but it is not unavailable in the same way as a broken radio (the unready-to-hand), or a transistor (the present-at-hand), or an electron (the pure-present-at-hand). That which is no-longer-ready-to-hand as that which could be again constantly solicits us and awaits the historian to reendow it with world.

An Internal Defense

As noted at the beginning of this appendix, William Blattner’s book on originary temporality has been an enormous resource for me. However, Blattner claims that ultimately Heidegger’s account of originary temporality is not only a failure, but that Heidegger himself was aware of this failure. Given the centrality of originary temporality to the thesis of this book, I will conclude by briefly addressing Blattner’s argument against what he takes to be Heidegger’s position. I will leave the question of what Heidegger himself believed for another time.²⁴ As with Appendix I, this is a fairly technical discussion and likely to be of little interest to one not already engaged in the issues.

Blattner claims that originary temporality, given its role in *Being and Time*, must explain *all* of world-time and that the project of the book fails because originary temporality does not have this much explanatory power. This claim is problematic initially as a means of understanding the way *Being and Time* is constructed, and this was not an assumption I made

in my earlier discussion. Simply put, Blattner misconstrues Heidegger's use of the principle "*a potiori fit denominatio*."²⁵ The principle here is that the stronger term need only be the condition of possibility and share some structural features with the weaker; the stronger term need not provide the weaker with all of its structure.²⁶ Does existential understanding provide all the structure for everyday understanding? Does ontological death provide all the structure for demise? Death is a particularly appropriate analogy.²⁷ Ontological death does share features with demise and is the condition of possibility of demise; nevertheless, the structure of demise, that is, everyday death, is also informed by the one, particularly through covering up, as well as by "perishing," which is a possibility predicated of humans as creatures present-at-hand. And so in the case of death there is a threefold distinction: ontological death, death as originary existentiell (i.e., demise), and ontic-existentiell death (perishing).²⁸ Without ontological death, we cannot understand all of the features of demise, but that is not say that the reverse is true – that is, ontological death does not and cannot explain all of the features of demise (much less perishing!).²⁹ Put simply, the bar that Blattner claims Heidegger fails to reach has been set too high.

Once one does not look for originary temporality to explain all of world-time, there is not a particular problem for Heidegger with succession, which is the feature of world-time that Blattner believes cannot be explained by originary temporality. The succession of disengaged and world-time would seem, *prima facie*, to be just the sort of thing to be explored by the thematic treatment of time as present-at-hand, that is, to be treated scientifically. Moreover, following Dreyfus, Blattner accepts that there are entities best understood as independent and yielding truth only to thematic study, but Blattner rejects the idea that time too could be such an entity.³⁰

Blattner actually spends very little space developing what he will later claim to be a decisive objection to Heidegger's whole project. Here is Blattner's argument against his own reading of Heidegger as best I understand it.³¹ There seem to be two parts to this objection. First, although having an unattainable-for-the-sake-of-which does compel Dasein to have a series of tasks, it seems untrue to the phenomena to claim that this necessity is strong enough to explain the successive quality of everyday time. Taking Blattner's example, we may indeed need to take out the chalk before we can write on a blackboard, but why does this for-the-sake-of-which require that I go to the movies *after* rather than *before* (or *during*) class? Second, originary temporality does not explain why there

needs to be a succession at all. Originary temporality explains the need for unattainability, but not why this unattainability needs to occur in a sequence.

Yet, once again, originary temporality need not disclose all of world-time's structure. Originary temporality is called temporality because, it shares features with world-time and because, without the background provided by originary temporality, world-time cannot be disclosed, but the explanation provided by originary temporality need not be complete. Thus, if there are indeed features of world-time not captured by originary temporality, then we may look to other aspects of human existence. For instance, the fact that it is appropriate to go to the movies after class is a structure provided by the one, that is, by the norms of one's society, and these norms are themselves historical.

Of the various ways of understanding the successive feature of world-time that Blattner finds so problematic, I take the most plausible to be the idea that time as a present-at-hand entity, that is, as a thing of nature studied by science, can be shown to have the feature of succession. As mentioned earlier, Blattner does not object to Dreyfus's account of the nature of present-at-hand entities as *not* explanatorily dependent on human beings, but he does not believe that this account holds true for time. This difference has dramatic consequences. Since originary temporality is the final phenomenon in *Being and Time*, Blattner takes Heidegger as some type of idealist, which is a very unlikely position. Blattner takes this position despite the clear reference to the "nows" in the ordinary conception of time as *co-present-at-hand* with entities and thus open to the same scientific thematization.³²

The only argument that I can find in Blattner against just taking the now as present-at-hand is the following: I can stare at a spoon until its significance withdraws and it is just wood, but while doing so I would be using *other* equipment as equipment – say, a chair. The equipmental totality is such that it can support the thematization of one entity. This is not true for world-time. Even as I sit and stare at the second hand of a watch, counting the empty homogeneous nows, I am still within world-time. World-time has not become present-at-hand in the way that the spoon has.³³ There are at least two problems with this argument (I suspect more). First, Heidegger definitely describes one mood in which everyday time itself withdraws, namely, anxiety, though it is true that it is hard to image much science being done while one is existentially anxious. Nevertheless, this does seem to attest to the possibility of a mood in which *just* time withdrew. Indeed, it seems to me that such a mood would often

accompany both extreme involvement (when one just misses lunchtime) and extreme lack of involvement (when one just “can’t be bothered” to feed oneself).

Second, and more importantly, Blattner’s disanalogy is flawed (which is to say that I think that the analogy is pretty good). The thematization of time as present-at-hand does not consist in somehow leaving everyday time, but in the very conceiving of a now that *is* time. It is staring at a spoon until it “is” just brown that is the dimming down of the phenomenon (i.e., it also remains round, shiny, etc.). Contrary to Blattner, it is not that the spoon is just present-at-hand, but that “it is just brown.” So too it is not a matter of time just being present-at-hand, but of lunchtime becoming just another now; it is possible, even probable, that this procedure of dimming down (more positively called “focusing”) could result in the uncovering of truths about the spoon or the now that could not be disclosed through our ordinary everyday coping or even through phenomenology. Indeed, this process of focusing in order to reveal what is always already there need not be associated solely with modern science, as this is the method that I have just argued Thucydides uses to disclose our historicity.

Notes

Introduction

1. 8.24.3–5. All citations are to Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, unless otherwise indicated, and all translations are my own, including emphasis that I believe is in the original, unless otherwise indicated, though all are indebted to the many excellent translations available. Transliterated Greek terms not in general use in English are italicized.
2. In trying to rekindle wonder as the first step, I am [loosely] following Aristotle. *Metaph.* 982b10.
3. See the summary of the debate about Herodotus's publication date in Munn (2000), 363 n.78. Munn accepts a late publication date for Herodotus, between 425 and 415 B.C. (following Fornara), and then proceeds to argue for a late publication date for Thucydides, namely, 396–5 B.C. Munn (2000), 315–23. Given that I find that Munn is more convincing in suggesting a later publication date for Herodotus than for Thucydides, and instead assuming that Thucydides started to work on his text when the war began, as he himself claims (1.1.1), then both authors were partially working at the same time, i.e. from 431 B.C. through 415 B.C.
4. See the ignored advice of Hecataeus, Herodotus 5.36.2–4.
5. Histiaeus: Herodotus 5.35.4; Aristagoras: Herodotus 5.35.1.
6. Slave: Herodotus 5.35.3; ship's captain: Herodotus 5.33.3–4.
7. *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth "*PI*") sec. 309.
8. Sluga (1996), 338.
9. Ibid., discussing *PI* sec. 308.
10. Momigliano, similarly, writes of an "iron tower in which Thucydides wants to shut us, after having shut himself in it." Momigliano (1990), 53. The limitations of this image, obviously, are that it does not explain how we have lived inside this tower for so long, often not even realizing it, much less how we were ever coaxed inside.
11. Or perhaps it was not. After all, the speeches may well function like the famous ladder image at the end of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*—if we understand

their import, then we also understand why by Book Eight we no longer need them. From this perspective, which is the perspective of this book, the speeches are central to drawing us into the new world of history that only long afterward is a world in which largely fictional speeches increasingly have no place. Interestingly, Dionysius of Hallicarnassus, an ancient critic of Thucydides, active in Rome at the end of the first century B.C, attributes just this realization to Thucydides. *Thuc.* 16. Dionysius's opinions on the text will be noted, as they seem to bear on the issues, but especially as regards the depth of understanding of Thucydides, I agree with Thomas Hobbes, who says of Dionysius's comments, "I think there was never written so much absurdity in so few lines." Hobbes (1975), 21–2.

12. The tension between the confidence of the style and the emphasis on toil and research has been noted by many; see, e.g., Hunter (1982), 37–8, 228–9; De Ste. Croix (1972), 7; and especially Woodman (1988), 15–23.
13. Pericles is, of course, the exception that makes the rule here, and it is for this reason that we will return to him later.
14. A useful, though limited, analogy here would be with psychoanalysis. Freudian terms have so permeated our culture that they have become obvious (say, in poppsychology). Yet the unconscious is new even though humans always have had an unconscious, according to the discipline and discourse of psychoanalysis.
15. On this, I think, Dionysius's testimony about the difficulty of the text even for highly educated ancient readers is important (see, e.g., *Thuc.* 51), though the best evidence remains the text itself.
16. I am not even sure to what extent it even makes sense to discuss "accidents of transmission" in the case of ancient texts given the consensus spanning millennia that was required to preserve most of the complete works left to us.
17. Again, here is Dionysius writing several centuries later: "In this way, then, he differed from the historians before him, and I say this since he chose a subject which neither consists entirely of one member [like Hellanicus] nor is divided into many irreconcilable parts [like Herodotus]. Moreover, he did not insert anything of the mythical into his history to practice deception and magic upon the masses, as all the historians before him had done . . ." *Thuc.* 6 (translation Pritchett).
18. Hornblower (1995), 56–7.
19. *Ibid.*, 59.
20. Rusten (1997), 29.
21. On Polybius as the faux Thucydides see De Ste. Croix (1972), 31 (following de Romilly). On Polybius as a pro see Derow (1994), 84.
22. For instance, there is Simonides's Elegy on Plataea. See Boedeker (1996) (this whole issue of *Arethusa* is dedicated to the "New Simonides") and Aloni (1997). Simonides's repeated appearance in this book should be noted, especially as read by Anne Carson, since his art of creating memory through precise, riddling, and isomorphic use of language makes him an important precursor to Thucydides, though not one, alas, that we will be able to focus upon.

23. Indeed, Hornblower argues that the relative lack of interest in Thucydides versus Herodotus in the fourth century through the first century B.C. was partially caused by the less than noble theme. Hornblower (1995), 61, 63–5.
24. Momigliano makes a similar point: “The most important achievement of Thucydides was to persuade his successors that history is political history.” Momigliano (1990), 45. As regards Polybius he notes: “[Polybius] kept history writing in the direction indicated by Thucydides” Ibid., 47.
25. The connection between Thucydides and tragedy has often been considered, to some extent already in antiquity (on the pathos of Thucydides’s text, see Dionysius *Thuc.* 24), and more recently and famously by Cornford, but also by J. Finley, Macleod, Hussey, and especially Parry (see the later discussion). The connection to Presocratic philosophy is less often made, though it has been noted in passing by many, e.g., Allison, Crane, Hussey, Rahe, and Hunter, the last writing that the Greek historians are the greatest source of “applied presocratic philosophy” (see the later discussion). Hunter (1982), 10. However, in neither the case of tragedy nor Presocratic philosophy has the argumentation involved a very specific approach to tragedy or philosophy and hence, necessarily, not to the relationship between them and Thucydides either.
26. Nietzsche (1990), “What I Owe to the Ancients,” sec. 2.
27. Put another way and to borrow from Isaiah Berlin’s famous essay, the question here is whether Thucydides is a “hedgehog” or a “fox.” Berlin (1978). A hedgehog is a thinker animated by a passion for system, for subsuming the world under universals. A fox is absorbed by, even celebrates, the world’s resistance to universalization. Unlike Tolstoy as read by Berlin, Thucydides is an unrepentant fox and not any sort of hedgehog, like Plato. Cf. Rood (1998), 293. Why we cannot take Thucydides for what he obviously is is another question.
28. June Allison, in her immensely valuable work, falls prey to this because she does not seem to see any other possible use for Thucydides’s passion for the creation of neologisms, particularly abstractions, other than a conceptual one, and one that is essentially proto-Platonic because what Thucydides is said to want to do is achieve greater clarity in the minds of his readers, particularly through the process described by Quine as “semantic ascent.” Allison (1997b), 81–8. Semantic ascent means the move to ever more general terms: “it is the shift from talk of miles to talk of ‘mile’.” Quine (1960), 271. Semantic ascent is meant to “[carry] the discussion into a domain where both parties are better agreed on the objects (viz., words) and on the main terms concerning them.” Ibid., 272. Appropriately, and strikingly, for Allison, the overarching goal of Thucydides’s text is thus “information transfer.” Allison (1997b), 49. Allison does recognize that between Thucydides and Plato there are important differences, characterizing Thucydides as a “coach” and Plato as a “game strategist.” Ibid., 238. It is surely correct to characterize Thucydides as more absorbed in the game, but, it will be argued, wrong for Allison to also conclude that the “basic truth” of the game for both Thucydides and Plato is always the same and that this basic truth is realized “three times removed from the field of play.” Ibid.

29. Nietzsche (1990), "What I Owe to the Ancients," sec. 2.
30. 3.82–3. See also the later discussion.
31. Hornblower (1995), 55–6, 62.
32. Thucydides 3.84.
33. See Saunders (1998) and later discussion.
34. Nietzsche (1967), "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," sec. 1; Nietzsche (1990), "What I Owe to the Ancients," sec. 5.
35. See, e.g., *PI* sec. 127: "The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose" (Anscombe translation).
36. There are several reasons for this. First, there are the methodological concerns, suggested in the text, namely, that looking for intentions in ancient texts is a hopeless quagmire. Second, there are philosophical problems, also discussed in the text. World disclosure is a metaphysical event that does not rely on the particular uptake of any individual. It is the operation of the text that matters. Third, logistically, developing the future history of Thucydides's text is the task for another book. Furthermore, as Hornblower notes, Thucydides's influence is more apparent for periods in which we have more extant material, strongly suggesting that we only have fragments of the exciting story of how Thucydides was in fact absorbed into a tradition, and this too indicates that the first step is to restore Thucydides's text to its full disclosive power. Hornblower (1995), 68 n.93.
37. For example, see Garrity's discussion of the clear battle narrative in Thucydides 4.33 versus the confused one of 4.34; Garrity presents his analysis in the context of "readerly experience." Garrity (1994), 72. Looking to the "reader's response" is, on the whole, also Allison's approach, as well as that of Connor.
38. Careful readers of Thucydides since antiquity have noted the disclosive power of Thucydides's text, though obviously without technical vocabulary. For instance, Hobbes cites Plutarch with approval when he claims that Thucydides makes his "auditors into spectators." Hobbes (1975), 7. More recently, Lowell Edmunds, for example, maintained that the speeches in the *History* are crucial to making history "intelligible." Edmunds (1975), 147, 68–9. He also speaks of Thucydides as writing "artistically" and "tragically," and, most strikingly, of Thucydides's logos as "gathering events into clarity." Ibid., 204; see also Loraux (1980), 71.
39. The discussion that follows is deeply influenced by Heidegger (i.e., "world" and "disclosure" from *Being and Time*, secs. 14, 44, and 72–7), especially as read by Dreyfus (in his commentary on *Being and Time*, in *Disclosing New Worlds*, and in conversation), as well as by Foucault (e.g., the two notions of "foundational" from "What Is an Author?"). Ultimately, these distinctions as presented here are my own and are offered in a provisional manner in order to elucidate the trajectory of this book. For additional discussion of my debt to Heidegger, see Appendix IV.
40. This example is limited insofar as the advent of the personal computer does not seem to offer the boundlessness of engagement that the world of the theater does, much less the world of industrialization, still less the world of history. In Heidegger's later work he develops the notion of "gathering,"

which I believe is helpful here. Worlds do not happen; they are gathered (sometimes by poets) and continue to gather even and including their own end. The personal computer is a site of gathering, though a limited one. This to say that it has not just changed letter and book writing, but that its effects extend ever outward, redefining the workplace, the family, the economy, etc., and these changes then rebound to affect the personal computer (e.g., making it cheaper), which then begins a whole new series of changes.

41. When Aristotle defines tragedy, he considers rhythm and harmony as well as song as all included under the type of logos appropriate for tragedy (*Poetics* 1449b25). On logos as reckoning of money, see, e.g., Seaford (2004), 231–3. Moreover, the spoken Greek language itself appears to have been (from *our* perspective) decidedly “musical.” Georgiades (1958), 26–30.
42. For a précis of the relevance of Thucydides to discussions of American foreign policy in the early twenty-first century, see Mendelsohn (2004). For a deeper analysis see Lebow (2003).
43. Clearly, I am accepting the majority view that Thucydides was well aware of Herodotus, though when and of which parts is not relevant here. I find Hornblower’s recent discussion generally very compelling. Hornblower (1991), Vol. 2, 122–37.
44. I feel confident making such broad claims about Herodotus because of the quality of recent work on his text. I am thinking here of Hunter, Crane, and especially Kurke. Hunter (1982), Crane (1996), Kurke (1999). Also notable is Hornblower’s *Introduction* to Volume Two of his *Commentary*, which includes a list of parallel passages in Herodotus and Thucydides. Hornblower (1991), Vol. 2, 19–39, 122–45. Kurke is invaluable for deepening the discussion of Herodotus, particularly his recording of incommensurable, yet contemporaneous, oral traditions, while Crane is crucial for establishing that there was indeed an epochal gap between the work and worlds of Herodotus and Thucydides. Hunter’s analysis of the different assumptions about the structure of history (and time) underlying this gap is profound and anticipates many of the arguments of this book. We will briefly return to the distinction between Herodotus and Thucydides again in connection with Thucydides’s first sentence and the story of Croesus in contrast to that of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.
45. This is not meant to be a criticism. Hunter rightly applauds Herodotus for his “source criticism.” Hunter (1982), 96–9. Indeed, it is Herodotus’s commitment to preserving his world that makes him such a valuable source for Kurke’s project (and such a pleasure to read), namely analyzing the tensions in a world stretched between orality and literacy, gold (and other traditional sources of wealth and prestige) and currency.
46. Hunter (1982), 101–2.
47. See *ibid.*, 234, and later discussion of institutional analysis.
48. See, e.g., *ibid.*, 287.
49. This analogy is obviously a much abbreviated form of the complicated (and controversial) argument made in Kuhn (1996).
50. Dillery (1995), 17–19.

51. For instance, see Carr (1961), 145; Toulmin and Goodfield (1965), 39–40. Collingwood's slightly longer and well-known discussion of Thucydides will be addressed directly by the argument of this book. Collingwood asks: "In reading Thucydides I ask myself, What is the matter with the man, that he writes like that? I answer: he has a bad conscience. He is trying to justify himself for writing history at all by turning it into something that is not history [namely, psychological history, following Cochrane]." Collingwood (1946), 29. We will provide a better answer to the why of Thucydides's style.
52. A good example is Allison (1997b) (see later discussion).
53. *Pl* sec. 217.

Chapter 1: Thucydides's Vision

1. 8.24.3–5.
2. De Romilly (1963), 224–5.
3. Mark Munn has argued, ingeniously, that the work we have is complete as is, right down to the words with which it ends in midsentence, "to Artemis." According to Munn, this is an appropriate dedication, particularly given Themistocles's relationship with the goddess and, interestingly, Heraclitus's connection with her. Munn (2000), 325–6. Munn does not explore the deeper affinities between Heraclitus and Thucydides.
4. See, for instance, Rood, who concludes: "The best evidence for the work's unity are its pervasive thematic and verbal links." Rood (1998), 51–2. The approach of this book parallels that of Rood generally, which is to say that it seeks to explain the text through analyzing the text rather than reaching behind the text to Thucydides's supposed personal history and opinions, and we reach similar conclusions, e.g., on the appropriateness of the state of Book Eight. *Ibid.*, 252ff. Yet Rood's question is not about world disclosure and his tools are of narratology – hence the different focus of this book.
5. For a somewhat more technical derivation and description of these features, see Appendix IV.
6. See generally Rood and Connor; also see Hornblower's catalog of specific devices, including narrative displacement, particularly temporal displacement, negation (e.g., Thucydides's use of "not so much"), and even Thucydides's used of patronymics. Hornblower (1994). There is also Stahl's discussion of "recurring structural elements of event sequences." Stahl (2003), 129ff.
7. Meiggs (1972), 361–2, following 8.12.1–2 and 8.24.6
8. Tragic here does not mean complete destruction, though it does mean suffering. The Chians will actually manage to lift the siege, largely as a result of Athenian concern with the revolt of Miletus, a revolt that the Chians themselves had fostered. 8.16.1, 8.61–3; cf. Rood (1998), 261–2.
9. As in Rechenauer (1991).
10. As in Allison (1997b).
11. Actually, only the first twenty sections discuss the distant past – the last three are primarily about method – but for simplicity I label the entire opening passage the "Archaeology."

12. As Parry puts it: “This [first] sentence is an introduction, and at the same time contrives to put the reader *in medias res*; the rest of the *History* follows from it forcefully and naturally.” Parry (1981), 95.
13. The translation is my own, but I should note that it is most like that of Hobbes, who also does not insert the word “history” into this passage (and so not “Thucydides wrote the history of the war,” as in Crawley) and thus keeps the war the direct object of Thucydides’s craft; he also preserves *axiologos* as “worthy of relation.”
14. Parry (1981), 94.
15. Munn (2000), 137–8, 277–8.
16. See also Hunter, who argues that the word indicates “self-conscious writing.” Hunter (1982), 227. Hornblower notes that this is not the same word used by Thucydides in other places to describe what his predecessors have done, where he also uses a *sun* word, but it means merely to “place together” rather than to write. 1.21.2, 1.97.2; Hornblower (1991), Vol. 2, 20, 27–8.
17. When I use the word “perform” I use it in the technical sense first developed by Austin (1970). A piece of language, such as “I promise,” is performative insofar as it is not a description of an action (that *can* be true or false), but is the action itself (that *cannot* be true or false). Philosophers as diverse as Judith Butler and John Searle have noted that performative utterances are particularly bound up with human institutions, especially the law (including changes in the law). Butler (1997), 80–95, 157–8, 161–3; Searle (1995), 54–5. Thus, the claim here is that Thucydides is not just describing a new kind of writing, but is doing it and in so doing is creating a new human institution.
18. Munn ultimately does domesticate Thucydides’s text into a “deliberative brief” meant to advise the Athenians as they undertake to regain their empire. Munn (2000), 315–29. Munn is certainly correct to note all the ways that Thucydides’s work speaks to this issue and to emphasize the rich tradition of looking to the past to advise the demos in which this work partakes. Nevertheless, whatever the immediate intentions, and the worldiness of Thucydides’s *History* speaks to many other moments and concerns, it is quite an exceptional thing if this brief, complete in itself (as Munn argues), should have been continued and emulated as it was. And thus the question of this book remains the same, if differently articulated if one follows Munn: namely, how could a deliberative brief with such a narrow purpose have resulted in the advent of a discipline that would eventually reveal that its founding document was misunderstood almost from the moment it was written?
19. Description of Athenians by Corinthians: 1.70; description of Themistocles: 1.138.3.
20. This is not to say that Thucydides abandons Herodotus’s stance of relative impartiality. Hornblower (1987), 27.
21. Immerwahr (1960), 268, 275–80; also Parry (1981), 93–4. Thucydides is also concerned with praise, as Immerwahr notes as well, but there is clearly a different focus. Immerwahr (1960), 281ff. For the nature of Thucydidean praise, see the later discussions of Pericles’s Funeral Oration.

22. It is not so obvious that there was even one war; it could be easily seen as a series of separate skirmishes; there are several intervening peaces after all, not just the “peace” of Nicias (cf. 5.25), but the interrupted peace between the first Peloponnesian War and “our” war. Why reckon as we do? De Ste. Croix very plausibly thinks we should include the first Peloponnesian War. De Ste. Croix (1972), 3. A younger contemporary of Thucydides, Andocides, argues that Thucydides’s war was really two wars, a politically charged claim in context. Munn (2000), 321 (construing Andocides 3.8–9). It is not just Thucydides’s influence that has triumphed in terms of what we now see, but the composition he has composed. This is to say that what leaps out at us is that a series of problems led to the outbreak of our war (Corcyra, Potidaea, the larger question of the Athenian Empire) and were not settled by the peace of Nicias, which was merely a result of exhaustion – hence the necessity of a further war (a war that everyone expected).
23. 5.26.
24. See, e.g., Allison (1997a).
25. See Hornblower (1991), Vol. 1, 3, echoing Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 9). Also, as Connor notes, it is an *epideixis*, a “rhetorical display piece.” Connor (1985), 29.
26. Connor (1985), 29–30, 251.
27. Hunter (1982), 28ff.; Kallett-Marx (1993), 11ff; Allison (1989) generally.
28. 1.1.2.
29. See, e.g., Kallett-Marx (1993), 31–2; Rahe (1995–6), 123; Price (2001), 207–73.
30. 1.23.3.
31. Plant (1999).
32. Antiphon, *Choreutes* 31.
33. Gorgias, *Helen* 2.
34. 1.20.1–22.4.
35. Hunter (1982), 95–102. Woodman only finds an example of discussing the difficulty in context at 7.44.1, with 2.5.4–7 the only example of Thucydides not deciding for one account or another. Woodman (1988), 16–17. This is certainly an undercount, as Thucydides records confusion in Book Eight both specifically in connection with the Phoenician fleet and generally. Also, as noted previously in connection with Garrity, Thucydides is able to communicate the existence of confusion through the structure of his narrative, and so one needs to count more than narrative interventions. Nevertheless, the point that Thucydides’s narrative is far more magisterial than that of Herodotus is certainly sound.
36. Cf. Connor (1985), 21 n.6. The connection between simplistic polemics and world is well intimated in the following discussion of the role of Judge Richard Posner in founding the Law and Economics movement:

Posner has been the more influential figure in establishing Law and Economics as a school of thought . . . because [his work] is infinitely more imperialistic, complete, catechismic. It may offer mind-numbingly off-target answers to many, many questions, but it does have an answer for *every* legal issue, and, perhaps, more important, the answers can be derived from a very short list of normative and descriptive propositions about

individuals, markets, and the political process [a list of errors follows]. This really doesn't matter, though; Posner gets the underlying *world view* completely right, probably even *more* right by being so obstinate in his drive for completeness. . . . (Kelman 1987, 117, emphasis his)

37. It is striking that this is where Thucydides makes reference to the extraordinary public buildings Athens constructed with the wealth of the empire and not, for instance, during Pericles's Funeral Oration. See the later discussion; also see Immerwahr (1960), 280, 88.
38. 1.10.4. Expeditions are of special importance to Thucydides, given the expenditures of capital and naval resources that they require. Cf. Hunter (1982), 28–9. Already in his retelling of the Trojan War, Thucydides is creating a seamless historical space in which the Greeks of the Trojan War are motivated to go on a great expedition by the same more mundane factors that motivate his contemporaries, i.e., by fear, in this case of Agamemnon and his navy (and his ancestral wealth) and not by oaths. 1.9; Kallett-Marx (1993), 28. At the same time, and crucially, Thucydides's later account of the Sicilian Expedition does not let itself be reduced to any single motivation, though these same factors reappear, which is to say that there is both consistency and open-endedness.
39. One can make similar points about Thucydides's relationship to his other predecessors – at least to the extent that we know about them. Certainly, as is well known, there is much in the Archaeology that can be read as a critique of Herodotus (e.g., on the Pitane), but at the same time, Thucydides pays Herodotus the singular compliment of more or less continuing his work.
40. This is a good example of my using the name “Thucydides” as if he were a friend of mine, or at least an acquaintance – this is a seemingly unavoidable metonymy for “Thucydides's text.” I think this tendency is unavoidable, not only as a matter of convenience, but precisely because of Thucydides's success and thus the extent to which he does seem like a colleague. At the same time, it remains a central task of this book to emphasize Thucydides's otherness. On this point, as on much else, I follow Loraux (1980), 68ff.
41. 1.3.1–3.
42. Following, for instance, Morpurgo-Davies (2000), there is no “name” for name or “word” for word in Greek. Our passage supports this claim insofar as Thucydides uses *six* (or thereabouts, depending on how one counts cognate verbs, verbs with added prefixes, etc.) different possible names for names in this passage. Clearly, the Greeks used names, words, and language, and so there is a question of whether we can learn from this lack. I think so. First, this would seem to problematize Allison's picture of Thucydides as self-consciously pursuing semantic ascent; he seems to have no use for the creation of concepts. More profoundly, Thucydides conflates names as bearers of meaning, mere place holders, creations of literature and society (and more, no doubt!). But this conflation may well be justified because it is defensible to claim that even a proper name without the benefit of clear semantic content is a product of power and even wields power. Indeed, a name's lack of semantic transparency may provide it with the mystery that makes it so potent. Such an analysis of language is not only presupposed

by Thucydides's discussion of names within Homer, but is actually provided by Thucydides in connection with the Five Thousand – i.e., the absence of transparency as to whom the name referred to was a source of power because anyone could be a member (see 8.92.3 and later discussion).

43. Cf. Webber (1990), 198–200.
44. Hunter (1982), 19.
45. The most famous study of the *logos–ergon* dichotomy is that of Parry. The limits of relying on this simple reduction are manifested by Parry himself through the sheer volume of parallel phrases he assimilates to this distinction, such as *gnome–tyche*, which Edmunds treats so well on its own, and as largely itself tracking Athenian–Spartan. Parry (1981), 10–14. This is not to discount the import of this antithesis, just to resist the importation of a stable modern dichotomy, i.e., we should not be so quick to conclude that Thucydides was struggling through all of these phrases with our perceived split between word and object.
46. Parry (1970), 6ff; see generally Dionysius, *Thuc.* 24.
47. Finley (1939), 62.
48. Parry (1970), 20; Finley (1939), 82.
49. For a much better summary, see Christopher Blackwell's "Athenian Democracy: An Overview" and "The Development of Athenian Democracy," available online at www.stoa.org.
50. For instance, consider the skill of Themistocles in "interpreting" the Delphic Oracle (Herodotus 7.143ff.) or his stratagem to force a battle at Salamis (Herodotus 8.75ff.).
51. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1365b21–1366a22, and the author of the *Athenian Constitution*, *Ath. Pol.* 27–8; see also Webber (1990), 97–8.
52. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1358b20–9.
53. See, e.g., Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 41.2. Cohen summarizes the relation as follows: "The ideology of the Athenian courts encompasses democratic principles familiar to us, as well as other principles which seem to run counter to modern notions: that judgments should both be just and reflect the interests of the *demos*; that the parties should be judged only according to the law but that their usefulness to the state should be heavily weighted; that all should be equal before the law, but the service of the wealthy to the state should count in their favor." Cohen (1995), 118.
54. Loraux (1986a), 342 n.11.
55. Munn (2000), 36–8.
56. Munn observes that Harmodius and Aristogeiton seem to have been heroized by the Athenians within five years after their deaths (in 509 B.C.), which is to say at a point when everyone would have known whom they killed and why and with what consequences. *Ibid.*, 21. This is, of course, the same period that saw much of Athens's democratic self-creation.
57. For the argument for this seating arrangement, see Goldhill (1997), 59–60; also generally see Cartledge (1997).
58. For more on tragedy, see later discussion.
59. Ober (1989). See also Cohen (1995), 90–101 (discussing *Against Meidias*).
60. Griffith (1995).

61. This is not to claim that somehow the institutional changes came first, without logos as speech (or as reason). To the contrary, the whole point of referring to logos rather than its various aspects is to maintain that the concept cannot be rigorously broken up and that certainly no priority can be assigned to its various aspects.
62. Connor (1971), 207–9.
63. Pseudo-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* 2.
64. Pseudo-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* 16–18. It was generally local elites that would have legal disputes of the type that would be adjudicated in Athens, which made the courts instruments not only of imperial control but also of democratic control, as complained of by the Old Oligarch.
65. 1.77.1–5. And this is not to say that this self-praise, to some extent justified, was not also to some extent believed by the subjects of the empire.
66. As Ludwig notes, Aristophanes in the *Birds* parodies the Athenian domination of one common medium, namely the sea, with a play about Athenian ambitions on another, namely, the sky. Ludwig (2002), 355–6. The argument here is that the Athenians also targeted logos, which is, for humans, the most important common medium.
67. For a more thorough development of this argument, see Kallett-Marx (1993), 11ff.
68. De Ste. Croix (1972), 47.
69. Kallett-Marx (1993), 52–3.
70. Seaford has recently argued persuasively, if not conclusively, that currency was the crucial factor in causing the “Greek Miracle.” Seaford (2004), 176ff.
71. The wealth also needed to be public, at least to a considerable extent. Though it is wellknown that the Athenian polis relied on the contributions of its elite members in competition with one another to provide many public services (including outfitting individual ships), a key element of Thucydides’s argument (as analyzed by Kallett-Marx) is the extent to which the capital needed to be a public resource. When Thucydides’s Pericles (and modern historians) analyze the strength of the Athenian Empire (e.g., how long it could fight Sparta), they look above all to the wealth contained in the public treasury. To the extent that Thucydides describes a process in which an increasing amount of capital collected from the empire is being placed in private hands, he is describing a process of fundamental decline. See, e.g., Kallett-Marx (1993), 144ff. (on the cleruchy on Mytilene).
72. Following Meiggs (1972), 167–72.
73. Kurke (1999), 302–16.
74. See, e.g., Euripides, *Med.* 516–19, and generally Seaford (2004).
75. It is important to keep the notion of truth in mind since, for all of its seeming particularity in connection with the Athenians, Thucydides’s text has provided a home for many other people. Somehow, this particularity is transcendent.
76. 1.20.2.
77. 1.22.4.
78. Ludwig (2002), 158, 366.
79. See Appendix III for further discussion of aspect seeing.

80. 1.143.3.
81. For more examples of Thucydides integrating a ‘nonstandard’ notion of vision into his narrative, see Macleod (1983), “Thucydides and Tragedy,” 144. All essays referred to by Macleod are available in his *Collected Essays*, which is, unfortunately, a very sparse compilation with its pagination referring to the original articles. It is for this reason that I provide the title of the essay.
82. See discussion in Appendix I.
83. In fact, following Woodman, the phrase *to saphes* has a tragic resonance. Woodman (1988), 25–8.
84. Thucydides selects for a wise audience at least three times: 1.21.1, 1.22.4, 1.23.5. Parry counts twenty-three verbs of intellectual discernment through the end of 1.21, labeling *skopein* (“to view/consider”) “one of Thucydides’ favorite terms.” Parry (1972), 52.
85. Aristotle, *Metaph* 1.2, as glossed by Heidegger, *Plato’s Sophist*, 65ff.
86. Von Fritz (1974), 23–4.
87. *Ibid.*, 63.
88. *Ibid.*, 77–80.
89. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
90. Snell (1924), 21, 24–5.
91. This is the word translated as “intelligence” by Edmunds. Edmunds (1975), 1–6.
92. Snell (1924), 33, 35.
93. *Ibid.*, 33.
94. Fränkel (1974), 130.
95. Only six times, according to Rawlings, three of which occur during the retelling of the Harmodius and Aristogeiton story as that which the Athenians fail to *see* (see later discussion). Rawlings (1981), 116.
96. Fränkel also relates vision to Herodotus’s notion of *historein*, which seems plausible, but we must never forget that Thucydides avoids using this term himself. Fränkel (1974), 125; cf. Snell (1924), 65. My suspicion is that this verb, as opposed to Thucydides’s chosen self-descriptive verb, *sungraphein* (“compose”), lays too great an emphasis on perceptual seeing and too little upon the burdensome precision required to see whole situations as such.
97. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1404b2.
98. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1404b18–25.
99. Kitto (1966), 262.
100. For Kitto, the common link underlying the passages in Thucydides that depart from his usual terseness is their intense pathos. *Ibid.*, 271. Kallet-Marx offers a more direct answer, namely, that Thucydides continues to be very interested in the finances of the empire, though how he addresses this is often overlooked. For instance, as noted previously, she states that the parceling out of Mytilene (after its revolt) to Athenian absentee landlords (i.e., the formation of a *cleruchy*) subtly demonstrates the undermining of Athenian public finance precisely because this wealth is being realized by Athenian individuals. She contrasts the resolution of the sieges of Mytilene and Potidaea with Pericles’s suppression of the revolt of Samos, where the subjugated city is made to pay back the Athenian public treasury for the cost

of its subjection. Kallett-Marx (1993), 122–3, 144ff. This reading is entirely persuasive, but the care that she must use in teasing out this analysis only goes to demonstrate the extent to which financial issues, once established, have withdrawn into the background and also the method of close reading that Thucydides's text demands. The existence of such finely nuanced themes developed consistently so far beneath the surface of events also goes to the density characteristic of a world.

101. *Ibid.*, 13.
102. This suggests yet another way to read Thucydides's open-ended ending. Athens, a radically new society and seemingly the culmination of all human development, will be defeated through the interference of the Persian Empire – the “traditional non-Greek” empire that plays no role in the developmental story narrated in the *Archaeology*. What to do with such a remarkable backward-turning intrusion other than leave it to stand for itself?!
103. 1.23.5–6.
104. See Appendix I for further discussion.
105. Kagan (1969), 345–6; Finley (1972), 23; Sealey (1976), 319–21.
106. 1.23.6, emphasis based on my translation of the text.
107. 2.2.1.
108. 2.2.3. The fate of the Thebans, who do correctly foresee, surely should alarm those who believe they are following Thucydides when they act boldly on their foresight, especially since, as noted previously, Thucydides is writing for those wise enough to recognize the accomplishment in seeing.
109. Corcyra: 1.44.2; Archidamus: 1.82.
110. As Rusten notes, despite Thucydides's claim that this is when the war began, he seems to give us other candidates (e.g., the Athenian rejection of the Spartan Ultimatum), but what is here crucial for my argument is that *any* date for the beginning of a war (especially one this complex) can only be a result of argument, especially backward arguments. Rusten (1997), 96.

Chapter 2: The Case of Pericles

1. For instance, de Romilly also notes that Cleon echoes Pericles's last speech, though Thucydides clearly favors Diodotus. De Romilly (1963), 164–7. De Romilly explains this as reflecting a different time of composition rather than a deeper point about the world. She may, as a matter of fact, be correct (we'll never know), but our emphasis is on the operation of the text as it is, which is an approach de Romilly is clearly not entirely uncomfortable with, as when she states: “The fact is that the tradition of Pericles is, as it were, shared out between the two men [Cleon and Nicias].” De Romilly (1963), 191.
2. 1.139.4
3. Note the “at this time” directly following right after the account of Themistocles.
4. On Cleon: 3.36.6; on Nicias: 5.16.1 (not quite his first appearance); on Alcibiades: 5.43.2; on Athenagoras: 6.35.2.
5. 1.140.1.

6. 2.61.2.
7. 1.141.1.
8. In the Funeral Oration, Pericles will use a verbal form of *ananke* to describe what the Athenian Empire has done throughout the world (2.41.4). Compulsion is explicitly the tool of empire, but here in 1.144.3, the connection is more implicit. Nevertheless, Pericles is supporting his aggressive imperial policy through appeal to *ananke*, and whether or not Pericles's assessment is correct (or cynical), it is certainly self-fulfilling.
9. See, e.g., Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity at *NE* 1124b9–10 and the later discussion of *epieikeia* in Chapter 3. No less a christian than Friedrich Nietzsche could have provided the tagline: "Sometimes one can be rich enough to lose." This is a gloss on *Gay Science* (1974), sec. 163.
10. De Ste. Croix (1972), 55–65.
11. Cornford (1965), 15–24.
12. 1.145.
13. 1.87.
14. 2.65.3.
15. 2.22.1.
16. The even more famous analogy is between Oedipus and Athens, as analyzed by Knox. Oedipus's swiftness, intelligence, and energy, all sustained to the bitter end, are obviously reminiscent of Athens; the figure of Oedipus is, of course, even more questionable than that of Ajax. Knox (1957), 15, 18, 23, 183.
17. 1.143.5.
18. Kallet (2001), 43.
19. The particular association of Athens with *gnome* is developed at length in Edmunds (1975).
20. 1.143.4.
21. 1.73.2.
22. *On Thuc.* 18.
23. Ziolkowski (1981), 180–1. See also Burgess (1902); Strasburger (1958).
24. Original institutions: 2.37.1; tolerance: 2.37.2; lawfulness: 2.37.3; openness: 2.39; general pleasure in life: 2.38; beauty and knowledge without weakness: 2.40.1.
25. 2.41.1.
26. 2.43.1, and this is the second self-questioning – 2.35.1.
27. 2.43.1.
28. Ludwig (2002), 332.
29. *Ibid.*, 350–1.
30. 2.43.4.
31. 2.41.4.
32. See 2.44.4 for Pericles's attack on the poet Simonides.
33. See also 2.43.3.
34. 2.60.2.
35. On the so-called quiet Athenians see Carter (1986).
36. 2.62.2–3.

37. 2.62.
38. 2.64.3.
39. 1.144.1.
40. 2.65.7.
41. Hornblower (1991), Vol. 1, 230, 336.
42. In Euripides's *Bacchae*, it is a characteristic of Dionysus, but not of his cousin Pentheus. *Ba.* 622, 647.
43. 1.70.9.
44. 1.138.3.
45. See, e.g., Connor (1985), 63–75; Nielsen (1996), 397–407.
46. For example, see Woodman (1988), 32–40.
47. 2.37.3.
48. 2.53.
49. Though see the later discussion of *epieikeia*.
50. 3.36.6.
51. Cleon's constancy: 3.38.1; demos's inconstancy: 3.37.1; impugning the motives of the opposition: 3.40.1.
52. 3.38.
53. 3.37.
54. 3.37.2.
55. It is not a particularly good argument. Jurisprudentially, Cleon's position is relatively straightforward and somewhat plausible (at least at the extremes), namely, that a city is better with firm but bad laws than with good laws that are constantly shifting. 3.37.3. However, in context, this argument has traction only if it is the case that the earlier decision of the Athenian Assembly is properly given the force of law, and this is the rhetorical sleight of hand here. We will return to this passage in Chapter 3.
56. 3.40.4.
57. The significance of Saleuthus's killing (3.36.1) is that he had offered to try to lift the siege of Plataea. The fall of Plataea and the famous debate about the fate of the Plataeans are juxtaposed with the Mytilenian Debate; to the extent that the Athenians' quickness executed Saleuthus, they were thus somewhat culpable for the massacre of their most loyal ally. Cohen (1984), 45.
58. 3.50.2.
59. Kallett-Marx (1993), 144ff.
60. Macleod (1983), "Reason and Necessity," 67.
61. 3.49.1.
62. For a particularly penetrating version of this view, see Hussey (1985), 129–31. Interestingly, Hussey emphasizes parallels between Cleon and Alcibiades.
63. 3.42.
64. 3.44.
65. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1358b20–2.
66. 3.43.2–3.
67. And to money, though inefficiently; see Kallett-Marx (1993), 144. On expediency, see, e.g., White (1984), 75.
68. Compare Thucydides's account (3.27.8) with that of Diodotus (3.47.3–5).

69. On Brasidas, see generally Hunter (1982), 121ff; Hornblower (1991), 38ff. Hornblower notes the unique centrality of Brasidas as an individual whose heroism is assimilated to the model of Achilles (following *Symposium* 221c), particularly Brasidas's alienation from traditional Spartanness and Spartan leadership. *Ibid.*, 43. Hornblower finds such claims of alienation historically unlikely, and so the reading that follows offers another motivation for the un-Spartan characterization of Brasidas.
70. 2.25.2.
71. 2.85–7.
72. 2.93–4, 3.79, 4.11–12, 4.70.
73. 4.84.2.
74. 4.78 (Thessaly), 4.85, 4.114, 4.120 (Thrace).
75. Compare the claim made at 4.85.7 with that at 4.73, a discrepancy Thucydides notes in 4.108.5.
76. 4.85.4. Brasidas also argues that it would be *deinon* if, contrary to expectations, he had come with his small force not to allies, but to enemies who were going to resist their own liberation. 4.85.6.
77. 4.87. These appeals to force do contribute to his success. 4.88.
78. 4.105.
79. 4.81.
80. 5.110.
81. 4.81.
82. 5.8.
83. 4.103–6.
84. And perhaps, following Hunter, he could never have made a decisive contribution. Hunter (1982), 121–2. After all, Brasidas's "antiexpedition," namely, an expedition on land, with few forces and certainly no money, was not directed at the heart of Athenian power. That said, Brasidas himself was aware that the sources of Athenian revenue needed to be attacked, and his successes were clearly very threatening. 4.87.3; Kallett-Marx (1993), 172.
85. 4.60.
86. 6.72.2.
87. See, e.g., 7.73.
88. 4.61.4; Orwin (1994), 163.
89. 6.33.
90. 8.85.3.
91. Fear: 4.59.2; *stasis*: 4.61.1; military expeditions: 6.33.5; courage versus training: 6.72; Great Powers: 6.78.2.
92. 4.63.1, 6.80.4.
93. 6.76.1.
94. 6.10.1.
95. It has already been noted that Thucydides continues to be consulted on other wars, and without doubt he has much to say, but the worldly power of Thucydides is that what he has to say is never conclusory. This worldliness is already exhibited *within* the text by the time of the Sicilian Expedition.
96. 5.43.2.

97. See his repeated dismissal of *hesuchia* as the end of empire and the Athenian way of life generally at 6.18.2, 3, 6.
98. See generally the discussion of Alcibiades in Munn (2000), especially 110–11.
99. 6.17.1.
100. 6.92.2–4.
101. 8.88 (Persian interests); 8.46 (Alcibiades's advice).
102. 8.82.3.
103. 6.16.6–6.17.1. This is also another wonderful example of using a seemingly "bad fact" to his advantage. After all, the Peloponnesian alliance put together by Alcibiades *lost* the battle of Mantinea, and so this would seem to be an example of Alcibiades being ultimately unable to deliver on his ambitious plans.
104. 6.15.4, 8.86.4–5.
105. 5.45–6.
106. 4.27–8.
107. 6.19.2.
108. 7.8.
109. Compare 7.75 with 7.5.
110. 3.51, 3.91, 4.42–4, 4.53.
111. 7.11.2.
112. 6.104.
113. See, e.g., 6.47–9.
114. 7.48, 7.52.4, 7.74, 7.78.4.
115. 7.81.3.
116. Eclipse: 7.52.4; fear of the people: 7.48.3; *stasis* in Syracuse: 7.49.1.
117. 7.55.2.
118. 7.86.
119. 7.86.
120. 6.9.
121. 6.10.5.
122. 6.11.2–3.
123. 6.13–14; the old do no such thing – 6.24.3.
124. 7.48.1–2.
125. 5.43.2.
126. 6.16.
127. 6.15.
128. 6.28.2.
129. Nicias: 6.12.2; Phrynichus: 8.48.4.
130. See, e.g., 6.89.4.
131. Parry (1972), 61.
132. 8.89.3.
133. 8.92.3.
134. 1.134.
135. 1.135.2.
136. 1.138.3. Interestingly, Antiphon at 8.68.1 is given a similar description, and though he supposedly never willingly engaged in public activities, he is

condemned by the Athenians because of his reputation for δεινότης (the characteristic of being *deinon*), a single word that is supposed to capture all that the demos feared in a man of this type. For much more on *deinon*, see Chapter 3.

137. 1.22.1.

138. Nietzsche (1989), sec. 62.

139. It should be noted again that the powerful role I have assigned to Pericles presupposed neither historical processes that repeat mechanically nor a fixed human nature; these are modern retrojections onto the consistency, ubiquity, and density of the text.

140. There is no claim that this had to happen to Pericles, just that it did, and this narrative structure itself has power. The power of this narrative structure is tied to a necessary feature of identity – see the discussions in Chapter 4 and Appendix IV.

141. See, e.g., Williams, “Did Thucydides Invent Historical Time?”

142. Hegel (1977), secs. 438–76.

143. *Ibid.*, secs. 474–5.

144. *Ant.* 1080–1. As Mark Griffith notes, these lines seem to refer “ahead” in mythic history to the battle over the other dead attackers (i.e., *The Seven Against Thebes*) – a battle on behalf of the defenseless fought by Theseus and the Athenians. Griffith (1999), 308. Yet, as Griffith also notes, this reference is curious. On the one hand, it demonstrates the extent of the disaster Creon has brought on himself and his polis, and yet it is troublesome because Creon will realize that he must bury his nephew Polynices without also realizing that he must bury the other dead. What is noteworthy is the frequency with which such peculiar prophecies/actions appear at the end of tragedies.

145. The most obvious examples are Sophocles’s *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, as well as Euripides’s *Medea*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and, as we will see, the *Bacchae*. I would argue that even the *Oresteia* ends with the outward movement of disaster – i.e., the violence in Athens (the *deinon* in fact) is to be directed at enemies from without and no longer at those within. I will go so far as to say that there is increasing scholarly consensus about the open-endedness of the plays of both Euripides and Sophocles (though less for Aeschylus) – see the work of Dunn (one book, one article) and Roberts (five articles) and the recent collection entitled *Classical Closure*.

146. Hegel (1977), sec. 475. And Hegel is hardly alone in this seamless movement. Dunn also makes it and, in an even broader argument, so does Dougherty. Dunn (1996), 155–6, 174; Dunn (1997), 110; Dougherty (1993), 24–7. I don’t disagree with such movement; I only wish to note that, like Hegel, respected contemporary philologists move from poets to tragedians to Thucydides without comment.

147. I will not be relying on Hegel’s theory of tragedy for what follows. Admittedly, Hegel does not discuss Thucydides at any length.

148. See generally the many parallels adduced between Thucydides and Euripides in particular in Finley (1967), “Euripides and Thucydides,” 1–54. In the footnotes that follow, I only offer exemplars, as passing remarks on the connections between Thucydides and tragedy are innumerable.

149. Pouncey (1980), xiii. Pouncey's definition of pessimism, however, does anticipate the trajectory of the next chapter, namely, that Thucydides's pessimism manifests "the conviction that human nature carries within itself drives that are destructive of its own achievements, that they are in fact the same drives as those that build historical achievements in the first place. . . ." Ibid. Pouncey is not very specific about what these drives are and relies on a reified notion of human nature.
150. Parry (1981), 97; Macleod (1983), "Thucydides and Tragedy," 157–8. Macleod actually thinks that Homer is a bigger direct influence on Thucydides and tragedy than tragedy is a direct influence on Thucydides. Ibid., 157–8.
151. Flory (1988), 56.
152. See, e.g., Pouncey (1980), xi. Stahl too relies on unanalyzed human nature and standard tragic structures (see, for instance, his discussion of Demosthenes's Aetolian campaign, complete with reversals and recognitions). Stahl (2003), 33, 130ff.
153. This is Cornford's general argument, which also contains very specific claims of parallels, particularly with Aeschylus. Some are plausible, such as Thucydides's account of the Spartan King Pausanias as having a typically hubristic personality, and some are much less so, such as asserting that Thucydides thought that Pericles's hostility to Megara, and the war that resulted from it, were products of a family curse. Cornford (1965), 136, 244–50.
154. Hussey (1985), 136–8. There are some readings that relate Thucydides to an outright inaccurate view of tragedy, thereby skewing both. See, for instance, Mittelstadt, who attributes to tragedy a moralizing element, a critique of "selfishness," which he then finds in Thucydides as well. Mittelstadt (1985). Even this argument has merit, as we will see: tragedy and Thucydides *do* address the problem of self at the center of the life of the polis, but in a much more complicated way.

Chapter 3: *Deinon*, Logos, and the Tragic Question

1. Here are Winkler and Zeitlin on coming to grips with the Great Dionysia:

[W]e would have to imagine Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Sam Shepard had each written three serious plays and a farce for a one-time performance on a national holiday – say, the Fourth of July – in honor of an ancient hero-god, perhaps a cross between George Washington and Johnny Appleseed, and that these were preceded by a parade of congressional representatives and cabinet secretaries and federal judges and governors and mayors, that the plays were performed after ceremonies honoring the war dead and our national allies, that bishops and generals and mothers superior had prominent places in the front rows, and that the choruses who sang and danced were composed (so Winkler argues) of West Point cadets, dressed sometimes as old veterans, sometimes as refugees or prisoners of war, occasionally (but only rarely) as young men. (Winkler and Zeitlin 1990, 5)

For a smart discussion of recent scholarship on the general institutions of tragedy, see Cartledge (1997).

2. *Poet.* ch. 13.

3. Specifically, Kathy Eden notes the specific parallels between Aristotle's advice on how best to create a tragic protagonist and how to create a legal defense when facing adverse facts; i.e., "I am just like you, but I made a mistake." Eden (1986), 58–9.
4. Meier (1993); Munn (2000), 32–6; Vidal-Naquet (1988), 305–8.
5. And *our* contemporary philosophers also find themselves returning to tragedy. This holds for philosophers as diverse as Judith Butler, Bernard Williams, and Martha Nussbaum.
6. Most famously, this is Nietzsche's argument in the *Birth of Tragedy* (1967).
7. *Eum.* 517, 698.
8. All these terms – "extraintentional," "institution," and "condition of possibility" – do *not* presuppose the subject–object distinction. Neither consciously nor tacitly does any individual or group of individuals move Hegel's history through their will.
9. Hegel (1999), 43.
10. Indeed, Hegel tells us that it is the unfolding of the *Phenomenology* that makes the *Science of Logic* possible, which is to say that it is only the very unusual manner in which our history has developed that has allowed us to have this very self-reflexive insight into our history. *Ibid.*, 48.
11. Hegel (1977), secs. 582–95.
12. This, I believe, is at the heart of Hegel's critique of the principle of noncontradiction as canonized by Aristotle (note that Aristotle accuses Heraclitus of violating this very principle). Not only can we think of contradictions, not only are there contradictions, but thinking of the contradictions is the precondition for thinking at all. Hegel (1999), 439–40. Ancient Greek society, like our society, *is* contradictory, and is actually powered by these contradictions. One cannot think about the polis without family versus state or literacy versus orality (a non-Hegelian distinction). There are no "winners"; if one side (say, the state) "wins," then the life of the polis ceases to be.
13. Here is how Mark Griffith describes the provocatively ambiguous time of tragedy – "not quite then, not quite now, floating between a Mythical Bronze Age monarchy and a contemporary democratic polis." Griffith (1995), 73. Herodotus records the unfortunate story of Phrynicus, an early tragedian, who portrayed the contemporary suffering of the Milesians; this was not approved by the Athenians, who fined him and forbade future performance of the play. Herodotus 6.21.2; Munn (2000), 22–3, 33. Munn notes that Herodotus's *Histories* also have a tragic structure, as they relate near-contemporary events that have a very contemporary resonance (will the Athenian Empire fall because of hubris?), and this is indeed another way in which Thucydides continues the work of Herodotus. Munn (2000), 41–5. Still, as ever, the continuation is always with a twist, and in this case it is primarily that Thucydides's absorption and deployment of tragedy are far more profound.
14. Herodotus 1.30–3.
15. Herodotus 1.55.
16. In fact, though, we do not find such rigidity in machines either, only in our alluring pictures of them. As Wittgenstein (1968) notes:

192. You have no model of this superlative fact, but you are seduced into using a super-expression. (It might be called a philosophical superlative).

193. The machine as symbolizing its action: the action of a machine – I might say at first – seems to be there in it from the start. What does this mean? – If we know the machine, everything else, that is its movement, seems to be already completely determined.

We talk as if these parts could only move in this way, as if they could not do anything else. How is this – do we forget the possibility of their bending, breaking off, melting, and so on? [...] (Anscombe translation)

17. By “accurately,” here, I mean that Herodotus also notes that the tyrannicides did not actually kill the tyrant, and this is Thucydides’s ostensible reason for first retelling this story. This only goes toward further demonstrating how little the passion for factual accuracy serves to explain the structuring of the text here. Herodotus’s version of the story most especially lacks Thucydides’s acerbic shrinking down of the tyrannicides. For more on the contrast between Thucydides and Herodotus on this story, see, e.g., Tsakamakis (1996). The most obvious point is that by emphasizing *his* retelling of the story, Thucydides is signposting the significance of this story as developing the contrast between him and Herodotus. The most famous discussion of this passage, and one that has influenced this entire discussion (and much else), is that of Stahl (2003).
18. Ludwig (2002), 167.
19. I translate the first telling of this story (1.20) in Chapter 1.
20. 6.53.3, 6.60.1; Rawlings (1981), 116.
21. 1.22.4, 6.60.2, 6.60.4, 6.61.1.
22. Taylor (1991), 78.
23. 6.61.2.
24. 6.24.3.
25. Macleod (1983), “Thucydides and Tragedy,” 45 (following Stahl).
26. 2.43.1.
27. 6.53.3, 6.70.1.
28. Munn (2000), 114–18.
29. Munn cleverly argues that it is this failure that explains the obliqueness of the reference, but he does not discuss the deeper issue of how this failure to “see before” undermines his thesis that Thucydides himself is primarily writing a deliberative brief. Ibid.
30. 1.70.
31. Also from Xenophon and Polybius – neither of whom create such a complex narrative structure.
32. Thucydides 3.82.8.
33. The translation of *deinon* as “dreadful” is provisional, as we will soon be tackling the various nuances of this word at considerable length.
34. For additional evidence for the centrality of logos in the passage translated previously (3.82.8), consider not only the role of logos for competition within the polis, but also the phrase Thucydides employs to describe the nonlimiting limiting that occurs in *stasis* – “at that moment.” This phrase is very similar to

the manner in which Thucydides introduces his whole manner of providing speeches in 1.22.1. In other words, it is striving after the *kairos* that can lift one into the *deinon*.

35. 3.82.3–4.
36. This point has also been made by others. See, e.g., Webber (1990), 203–24.
37. 3.82.4.
38. Parry (1981), 219 n.59.
39. 3.82.8.
40. Indeed, Suidas glosses tragedy as δεινοπάθεια – “suffering the *deinon*.”
41. *Il.* 5.739, 741–2, 839.
42. *Il.* 16.705–6.
43. *Il.* 11.654.
44. *Od.* 24.179.
45. *Od.* 8.409.
46. *Od.* 21.169.
47. *Il.* 13.100.
48. *WD* 692.
49. *WD* 760–4.
50. Interestingly, *chronos* does have a more explicit role. The Furies strike through time (i.e., they wait – *Ag.* 463, *LB* 651, *Eum.* 498). Clytemnestra even jokes about time (*Ag.* 621, 857) – i.e., she has been faithful to Agamemnon in time. Such riddles, of course, presuppose the *deinon* functioning of logos. But most striking is the personification of time as “all accomplishing” (*LB* 965); see also the later discussion of “all time” in *Electra*.
51. *Ag.* 1215.
52. Goldhill (1984), 81–2.
53. *Il.* 2.321, *Ag.* 104ff.
54. Conacher (1989), 9–10, 81.
55. *Ag.* 227; Nussbaum (1986), 37.
56. And this is hardly the only plausible reading one can arrive at by such a procedure. Hammond notes that Orestes is compared to a hare, but as far as I can tell, just something hunted. *Eum.* 252, 326; Hammond (1965), 54. Yet even as the target of a hunt, Orestes is thus assimilated to the young victims for whom Artemis is angry. Artemis is thus angry about the manner in which Agamemnon is imperiling his young, and this explains the otherwise very odd description of Agamemnon’s war cry as similar to that of an eagle/vulture having lost its young (*Ag.* 49ff.). Agamemnon’s rage for war will be the rage of one who is bereft of the children he thought to protect.
57. *Il.* 18.394; Nagler (1996), 150–1.
58. Calchas’s words infamously force Agamemnon to “don the yoke of *Ananke*” (*Ag.* 217).
59. *Ag.* 956–7.
60. *LB* 249.
61. *LB* 585–8.
62. *LB* 594–5.
63. One would be hard pressed to distinguish men from women based on Aeschylus’s use of near-synonyms for their daring and their spirits/minds.

64. *LB* 634.
65. *Eum.* 34, 46ff.
66. *Eum.* 128, 517.
67. *Eum.* 698.
68. *Eum.* 865. Or so these abstruse lines *seem* to say. Cf. Podlecki (1989), 186. At any rate, this line speaks of a *deinon* passion (eros) for glory (*eukleos*) that is to be directed toward war rather than internal strife. I suggest that *deinon* is the appropriate adjective here because, as the chorus from the *Libation Bearers* claims, it is eros that leads to the greatest *deinon* things. Athena accepts that such passions, capable of extraordinary compounding, cannot be banished from the human realm, but thinks, or anyway attempts, to banish them from her polis.
69. *Eum.* 1011, 826. Athena also has the power to make the Athenians comply. As Vernant notes, Orestes's human judges are more uncertain than she is about his innocence. Vernant (1988b), 81. What happens when there is no god to instruct on the placement of the *deinon*? This is one of the questions that will be taken up by others, notably Thucydides. The relation of the *deinon* to logos that I am seeking to establish here seems to fly in the face of more standard interpretations of the play; these emphasize that Athena uses logos in marked contrast to the *deinon* Furies. Here is Hammond:

Zeus never had been and never was omnipotent. At the end of the *Oresteia* he wins the Erinyes to his way of thinking not by force but by the persuasive power of his daughter Athena (E. 885f.).

Hammond (1965), 45. This is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, as noted above, there is an explicit threat of physical violence behind Athena's persuasion. Second, by this point in the trilogy, the notion that persuasion *is* violence has been well-developed. Starting backward from the *Eumenides*, we see that the furies are undermined by their lack of verbal skill and social connections (*Eum.* 70, 100ff.). They concede the rightful power that accrues to Athena through her parentage (*Eum.* 434), and Orestes explicitly appeals to the link which his parent has with that of Athena (i.e., the relation between Zeus and Agamemnon). Griffith (1995), 101–2. Orestes partakes in a relationship that the furies are excluded from, and he asserts this connection *verbally*. Moreover the entire setting of this final play suggests the awesome power of logos; Orestes is on trial – he will live or die based on the power of verbal argument. And, fortunately for Orestes, his advocate is the Olympian god associated with light, prophecy, and poetry, the child of Zeus most associated with carrying out Zeus's will (with the possible exception of Athena) – Apollo, with whom Orestes also has a relationship.

70. And in fact, this foundational moment occurs in a court. In Thucydides, as David Cohen points out, there are multiple references to courts and specifically to what the relationship should be between rhetoric, deliberative oratory, and forensic oratory. Cohen (1984), 49–60. When society finally breaks down (at Corcyra), it all starts with an abuse of the courts. Certainly the orators (e.g., Demosthenes in *Against Meidias*) are very keen to connect the functioning of democracy with the functioning of the courts. My

aim here is not to elucidate what Thucydides *really* thought about justice and democracy; rather, I wish to illustrate another example of a seamless movement between our extant sources, and a movement that is typically Athenian.

71. Friedländer (1934), 61. Both “*deinon* choruses” attract attention to themselves, but in different ways. Aeschylus’s chorus is the first in extant tragedy to comment directly on the action in a manner more typical of Sophocles. Garvie (1986), 202. Yet in Sophocles the ode is the only one in the play without mythic allusions. Segal (1981), 165. One might say that in thinking the *deinon*, Aeschylus prefigures Sophocles and Sophocles prefigures Thucydides. Put another way, the more we think about the *deinon*, about what is dreadful, the more we are directed toward ourselves.
72. *Ant.* 332–3.
73. *Ant.* 95–6.
74. *Ant.* 323; see also line 1046.
75. *Ant.* 243.
76. Nussbaum (1986), 53; *Ant.* 223–43.
77. Yet small steps may well be the biggest; here is a striking passage from Kierkegaard:

Heraclitus the obscure, who deposited his thoughts in his books and his books in Diana’s temple (for his thoughts had been his armor in life, and therefore he hung it in the temple of the goddess), Heraclitus the obscure said: One cannot walk through the same river twice. Heraclitus the obscure had a disciple who did not remain standing there but went further – and added: One cannot do it even once. Poor Heraclitus, to have a disciple like that! By this improvement, the Heraclitean thesis was amended into an Eleatic thesis that denies motion, and yet that disciple wished only to be a disciple of Heraclitus who went further, not back to what Heraclitus had abandoned. (Kierkegaard, 1983, 123).

78. Nussbaum (1986), 73.
79. Oudemans and Lardinois (1987), 129.
80. Heidegger, (1996), 69.
81. *Ibid.*, 71–4.
82. *Ibid.*, 67–8.
83. Also note the connection between Heidegger’s metaphysical notion of a counterturning and the necessary method for reading Thucydides’s text, namely, careful rereading, what Kitto calls its “to-and-fro manner.”
84. Nussbaum (1986), 59.
85. It is often noted that tragedies do not occur in the Athenian polis. Nevertheless, this image of the polis is extraordinarily Athenian, and the deployment of such an Athenian metaphor outside of Athens is surely *deinon*.
86. This is my translation of Heidegger’s German, influenced, of course, by the standard English translation.
87. Heidegger (1996), 71–3.
88. *El.* 221.
89. *Med.* 403.
90. Nussbaum (1986), 436 n.6.
91. *Ibid.*, 61, 64; Blundell (1989), 145–8; Vernant (1988c), 41–2.

92. *Ant.* 683–723. Before telling his father that he is wrong, Haemon opens his speech with the prayer that he may never know how to say to his father that he is wrong and closes his speech with the painfully pedantic image of flexible branches weathering the storm. Van Nes Ditmars (1992), 101–2. In his exchange with Creon after this speech, Haemon notes that Creon is the one speaking as a young man and cleverly responds that he is indeed fighting for the woman (namely, Antigone, as Creon accuses) if Creon is himself a woman. *Ant.* 735, 741. Logos allows for virtuosic displays of imbecility; just as there are no bad facts for Alcibiades, there are, apparently, no good facts for Haemon.
93. *Ant.* 951.
94. *Ant.* 946–50.
95. *Ant.* 361–2.
96. *Ant.* 1350–4.
97. Padel (1992).
98. Haemon notes that Creon has a *deinon* eye that prevents him from learning what is really occurring in the city, an accurate but typically self-defeating insight. *Ant.* 690.
99. *El.* 221–5.
100. Cf. *Ant.* 356.
101. Cf. *El.* 341.
102. *El.* 179.
103. *El.* 226–8.
104. *El.* 198–9
105. *El.* 235.
106. *El.* 770.
107. Of course, many have tried to set a limit on *atē*. For instance, Doyle identifies two types of *atē* – subjective and objective. Doyle (1984), 1–5. Subjective *atē* strikes a person’s mind and makes the person commit actions that he or she will regret. Objective *atē* represents the situation that is regretted. Thus subjective *atē* can often be translated as “madness,” while objective *atē* can be translated as “disaster” or “doom.” But Padel notes that many, indeed most, references to *atē* are more ambiguous, and she argues that there are generally two stages of *atē*; the stage where one makes a mistake and the stage where one suffers for it. Padel (1995), 167–94, 249–59. Though these stages loosely parallel Doyle’s two forms of *atē*, Padel tends to insist that *atē*’s appearance constitutes not one stage or the other, but the whole destructive process. I suggest going one step further; *atē* is the disaster that strikes humans. As the most *deinon* thing, it is appropriate for human doom to be constantly self-exceeding, elusive, even capable of working backward. This certainly seems to be the role of *atē* amid the *deinon* House of Atreus.
108. *El.* 235.
109. Cf. *El.* 376. This passage also reminds one of Hesiod’s advice to heed the measure and Danae’s lament about the evil afflicting her (both passages are discussed at length in Appendix II), as well as Protagoras’s famous saying that man is the *metron*. Plato, *Tht.* 152a2–4. Oudemans and Lardinois, following Friedländer, contrast Protagoras’s optimism in this saying to the darkness

present in Sophocles. Oudemans and Lardinois (1987), 127–30. This may well be correct, and yet we are humans. Thus, claiming that we are our own measure could also be an eminently Sophoclean insight because we humans are necessarily involved in the uncanny twisting involved with measuring ourselves.

110. *El.* 766–77.
111. *El.* 779–80; see also line 376.
112. *Ant.* 323.
113. *El.* 1039.
114. *El.* 1040.
115. *Dike* is, of course, the central word in Aeschylus's treatment of the House of Atreus; Podlecki, following Kirk, Raven, and Schofield's discussion of Heraclitus (fr. 80), takes *dike* as meaning something like the "indicated way." Podlecki (1989), 40, 42. The debate between Orestes and Clytemnestra, the clash of *dike* (*LB* 461), is a clash about the way for humans. In Sophocles we seem to have encountered a further pushing of this question: what kind of creature can debate its own way? Is this endless debate not the home of the homeless creature?
116. *El.* 1011–14.
117. *El.* 1288–95.
118. *El.* 1253–5.
119. *El.* 1412.
120. Cf. *LB* 965, *OT* 1212, *Aj.* 646–7.
121. *El.* 548.
122. *El.* 555.
123. *El.* 563.
124. *El.* 565.
125. *El.* 569. It is important that in this play Electra explains that Artemis is punishing Agamemnon. This changes the focus from that of the *Oresteia*, where the uncertainty as to Artemis's motivations keeps the focus on the *atē* of the House of Atreus. Yet, as in the *Oresteia*, Electra is explicit about connecting Clytemnestra's actions to the power of logos via persuasion (cf. *El.* 560–2).
126. And even this word is lost – indeed, the whole story is hearsay (*El.* 566)!
127. *El.* 619–21.
128. *El.* 622–3.
129. It seems to me that these words are invaluable for understanding Thucydides's play with the antithesis of logos and *ergon* as playing with two notions in substantial union rather than separated by an ontological and epistemological chasm.
130. *El.* 625.
131. Vernant (1988a), 138.
132. Vernant (1988c), 42–3. Vernant does note that what the audience should then conclude is that the ambiguities transparently manifested onstage reflect the tragic truth that there are deep ambiguities off-stage as well. The experience of the audience is not, as usual, our concern, only the logic of the plays and it is the ambiguity that is within the play that cannot logically

be limited to the stage and, whether or not this truth appeared to any Athenian consciousness, it is this logic that is developed in Thucydides's text.

133. *OT* 46–51, 120–1, 132.
134. *OT* 80, 132, 370, 374–5.
135. *OT* 418, 359.
136. *OT* 316.
137. *OT* 1297–9.
138. Teiresias's words: *OT* 483; Oedipus's words: *OT* 513; Apollo's oracle: *OT* 790; Oedipus's cry: *OT* 1260.
139. *OT* 1169.
140. *OT* 1170.
141. See, e.g., Williams (1993), 75.
142. *OT* 1311–12.
143. *OT* 1388–90.
144. *OT* 1329.
145. *OT* 1437.
146. *OT* 1260, 1265.
147. *OT* 1267.
148. *OT* 1258, 1260.
149. Captain: *OT* 922–3; rough seas: *OT* 22; storm of *deinon*: *OT* 1527.
150. *OT* 1193.
151. *OT* 1212.
152. *Aj.* 205.
153. Punishment: *Aj.* 952; words: *Aj.* 773.
154. *Aj.* 127–30.
155. *Aj.* 761.
156. *Aj.* 90.
157. *Aj.* 117.
158. *Aj.* 678–83.
159. *Aj.* 19.
160. *Aj.* 777.
161. Chorus: *Aj.* 600, 605; Menelaus: *Aj.* 1082.
162. *Aj.* 714.
163. *Aj.* 646–7.
164. *Aj.* 649–50.
165. *Aj.* 861.
166. Cf. *Or.* 1.
167. *El.* 85, 682.
168. Furies: *El.* 1252; persuasion: *El.* 1204; cries: *El.* 1327, *Her.* 870, 962; state of mind: *Her.* 1092.
169. *Hipp.* 85.
170. *Or.* 103.
171. *Or.* 413.
172. *Or.* 571.
173. *Hec.* 883–7.
174. *Hec.* 1097.
175. *Hec.* 379.

176. *Hec.* 592.
177. *Hec.* 846.
178. *Hipp.* 916ff.
179. *Med.* 516–19.
180. *Med.* 520–1; also *IA* 376.
181. One curious feature of *Medea* (as well as *Dionysus*) is that they stage their own tragedies; they thus seem to impinge on the role of the real tragedian, namely, Euripides. This is interesting because of Euripides's own transgressive reputation and, in particular, his violation of genre distinctions. His characters give rhetorical displays, go to court, and, most remarkably, are occasionally comic (e.g., the Phrygian slave in the *Orestes*). The very possibility of such crossings, much less their actualization, strikes me as *deinon*.
182. *IA* 98, 303, 887.
183. *IA* 127, 133.
184. *IA* 1257–8.
185. *IA* 53.
186. *IA* 527.
187. *IA* 1357.
188. *IA* 877–9.
189. Indeed, the whole *eros* that has launched the Trojan Expedition is *deinon* (*IA* 808, 1264).
190. Insofar as I see Euripides as the clearest tragic pointer to Thucydides, I am not claiming that his art is somehow debased (pace Nietzsche). I hope that my readings of Euripides demonstrate the inherently *tragic* depth that he dramatizes. Moreover, I recognize that it is partly an historical accident that we have no tragedies produced in the fourth century B.C. With such a tiny fragment of tragedy extant, we can hardly date the genre. Still, both the content and context of these two plays do suggest a looking-back characteristic of an ending, and the *Oedipus at Colonus* and the *Frogs* (especially the latter) betray a similar awareness. Somehow, tragedy was bound up with Athens as both a democracy and an empire.
191. Compare *Ba.* 245 and 492 with 642 and 971.
192. *Ba.* 971.
193. *Ba.* 861.
194. *Ba.* 856.
195. *Ba.* 841.
196. *Ba.* 1377.
197. *Ba.* 1374.
198. The word here is *hesuchos*, which, as we know, means more than “peace”; it is the restfulness of someone confident that he is “in bounds,” appropriate, in control. Thus Dionysus's *hesuchos* is contrasted with Pentheus's lack of it (cf. *Ba.* 622, 647).
199. *Ba.* 1360–2. Agave wishes to escape memory of the Dionysian (*Ba.* 1386), but forgetfulness too is a gift of Dionysus (*Ba.* 282–3), one neither she nor Cadmus is likely to receive.
200. *Ba.* 882ff.
201. *Ba.* 208–9, 421–3.

202. The way for mortals is *dike* and, in the *Bacchae*, it is infused with violence. Thus when the chorus asks that *dike* be manifest, they associate this with doing violence to Pentheus. *Ba.* 991; also 876–81, 897–901. In fact, on hearing of Pentheus’s actual demise, the chorus recognizes (lyrically) that now the god is great through becoming manifest. *Ba.* 1031. Thus a fairly clear commentary is offered on the detailed description of the violence to Pentheus that is to come: the manifestation is the *dike* is the vengeance is Dionysus.
203. Cf. *Ba.* 896.
204. *Ba.* 22, 39, 47, 50.
205. *Ba.* 61.
206. This is part of a larger emphasis on seeing in this play – an emphasis Vernant claims is uniquely “insistent” and “almost obsessive.” Vernant (1988d), 393. The role of seeing is not identical to that of “manifesting,” but there is considerable overlap – i.e., by desiring to see what he ought not, Pentheus is, in his own way, affirming the importance and difficulty of seeing.
207. *Ba.* 39–42, 222; Tulin (1994).
208. *Ba.* 64–166.
209. *Ba.* 266–327. Following Euben, I read this as an attempt to reveal Dionysus clearly in words – an unlikely and unsuccessful project. Euben (1990), 142.
210. *Ba.* 523–9.
211. Will of Zeus: *Ba.* 1349; no name in Thebes: *Ba.* 1377; the first Greek city: *Ba.* 23.
212. This is further suggested by the repeated claims that Dionysus is Zeus’s child – a repetition that highlights the truth in Dionysus’s name, that he is indeed the son of Zeus (cf. Dodds 1960 on line 1) and always has been. Cf. Easterling (1997), 53.
213. This is the future perfect, the temporal modality characteristic of epideictic rhetoric (see the upcoming discussion).
214. As Mark Griffith has suggested to me, the role of Dionysus in the *Bacchae* is a dramatization of the confusion engendered by gods, such as Apollo in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, as they meddle in the realm of the human. Thucydides takes this confusion even further, because now the gods have receded and the humans are still living up to their tragic potential as wielders of logos.
215. *Ba.* 888–90.
216. *Ba.* 893–6. These lines are striking in the vagueness with which they refer to divinity, their cost benefit analysis, and their indiscriminate acceptance of divine origin, be it from ancient *nomos* or emerging from *phusis*.
217. *Ba.* 475, 479, 491, 650, 655, 800–1, 805.
218. *Ba.* 809.
219. *Ba.* 507.
220. *Ba.* 1301.
221. *Ba.* 508.
222. *Ba.* 337.
223. *Ba.* 1244, following Kovacs (1991), 345.
224. 7.25.7.
225. E.g., 2.21.2, 6.49.2, 6.91.6.

226. E.g., 4.37.1, 6.31.1, 8.5.3.
 227. Lamachus: 6.49.2; Demosthenes: 7.42.3.
 228. See three uses at 4.126.3, 5, 6.
 229. 2.87.4, 4.85.5 (which is a hexameter!); Hornblower (1991), Vol. 2, 47.
 230. 5.9.8.
 231. 4.34.1.
 232. 7.75.2.
 233. 1.21.5; also 1.35.3, 1.102.4, 2.51.4, 3.93.1. Such usage can also be found in Xenophon (cf. *Hell.* 1.7.12, 1.7.28) and Aristophanes (*Ach.* 128, 315 – in reference to Dikaiopolis's separate peace and defense of the Spartans).
 234. 1.70.3.
 235. As does Phormio; see 2.89.1.
 236. 2.40.3–4.
 237. Pericles is also trying to select for an audience that can see clearly, much like Thucydides.
 238. Euben (1990), 177.
 239. 3.37.3.
 240. 2.61.2.
 241. 3.40.7.
 242. 3.45.7.
 243. 3.45.5.
 244. And this is explicit in the narrative and speeches concerning the Mytilenians. See 3.12.2, 3.13.6, which is noted by Cleon (3.39.3), who sees this only as a reason to make the penalty harsher.
 245. 3.45.4.
 246. 3.45.1.
 247. 3.43.2.
 248. 7.48.4.
 249. 3.59.2.
 250. 3.66.2.
 251. 3.82.8.
 252. Compare Herodotus 7.9.2 with 7.10.a3.
 253. Herodotus 7.10.b2, 7.10.c2, 7.50.1.
 254. It is interesting to note that Artabanus, the Persian adviser who seems most able to recognize the *deinon*, claims that slander is *deinon* precisely because of its power to compound. Herodotus 7.10.g2.
 255. 2.40.3.
 256. 1.76.4; seven of the nine uses of the term relate to Athens. De Romilly (1974), 97.
 257. *OC* 1127; see Kirkwood (1986).
 258. Democritus B252 DK; Saunders (1998), 71.
 259. 3.40.2, 3.48.2.
 260. 3.66.2.
 261. Gorgias B6 DK. Remarkably, in this fragment Gorgias also praises the dead Athenians for knowing when to speak and when to act, their *gnome* in respect to their minds controlling their bodies, and for being *deinon* amid *deinon* things. Other bits of praise from Gorgias commend the Athenians for being

- hubristic among the hubristic and fearless among the fearless, which underscores that to be *deinon* among the *deinon* is not simply to be excessive or to be fearless. For more on the history of *epieikeia* see Saunders (1998), 66–70.
262. For an overview of this history, see Shanske (2005).
263. *NE* 1137a31–1138a3.
264. *NE* 1137b35–1138a4.
265. *Rhet.* 1374b4–21.
266. De Romilly (1974), 96–7.
267. This argument about *epieikeia* complements Ludwig’s argument about eros discussed earlier. Insofar as Pericles is proposing that erotic attachment is to be a new paradigm for civic involvement, the disaster at Syracuse is evidence of its failure in contrast to the old value of *epieikeia*.
268. 3.82.7.
269. 3.82.5.
270. 3.20.3–6; Cohen (1984), 56.
271. 5.86.
272. 3.82.4.
273. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1356a14. In introducing the ethos appeal, Aristotle observes that we more readily trust speakers who demonstrate *epieikeia*, and Aristotle is at pains to emphasize the connection of ethos to the nature of the speech (logos) given in contrast to whatever it happens to be that the hearers already thought of the speaker. *Rhet.* 1356a4–9.
274. In 3.83.1, Thucydides states, famously, that “the simplicity (*εὐθες*), which is so much of nobility, was laughed down and disappeared” (translation following Hornblower 1991, Vol. 1, 487). This literally “good ethos,” Crane’s “ancient simplicity,” is clearly Thucydides’s name for what has been lost as a result of this war, and just as clearly, it seems to be some kind of nobility that allowed the agonistic poleis of Greece to avoid *stasis*; I think *εὐθες* is very plausibly assimilated to *epieikeia* as used by Thucydides in other passages and by Aristotle. Crane (1998).
275. See, e.g., *NE* 1167b1.
276. De Romilly notes that Thucydides uses a different “mild” word (*epios*) with traditional resonance to describe Athens’s internal relations. De Romilly (1974), 96.
277. 1.102.4, 5.42.2, 6.60.4.
278. 1.170.2–3.
279. 1.102.3.
280. 5.42.2.
281. 5.43.2.
282. 6.60.4.
283. 6.60.2, 6.61.1.
284. 5.93.1.
285. 5.86.1.
286. 5.99.
287. For a good discussion of the ultimate narrowness of both the Athenians and the Melians, see Morrison (2000).
288. 1.18.2.

289. 8.2.3.
290. 7.70.3; Allison (1997b), 47. Allison is thus surely correct that Thucydides's unique vocabulary is significant; it helps illuminate a world, and what is illuminated is in a sense true of our world too. Yet all truth need not be correspondence, and meaning need not be mediated by a "cognitive representation." *Ibid.*, 16. The truth here is not so much the connection between this precise word and a particular series of naval battles (the achievement of an "information transfer"; *ibid.*, 49), but the tensions inherent in human identity that this precise word illuminates.
291. Carson (1992a), 113.
292. It could be objected that the discussion of this poem is itself subsidiary to the larger debate about civic virtue and education, and this is true. Certainly, the political aspects of the dialogue are most often emphasized nowadays. Still, the sheer bulk of the poem's analysis argues not only for its centrality to the dialogue, but also for the centrality of poetry in the civic life and philosophical debates of the time. It is striking, of course, that the poet Protagoras uses to make his point, and the one Plato uses to make his, is Simonides, the riddling creator of memory.
293. Plato, *Prot.* 341a5–341e1.
294. Perhaps part of the joke is that any *Athenian* knows that *deinon* does not mean "bad." Taylor (1976), 142–3. As we saw, Brasidas certainly understood that *deinon* meant more than just bad, and he even knew how to manipulate this understanding. See, e.g., 4.85.6.
295. Carson (1992a), 128.
296. Plato, *Prot.* 361a5–d6.

Chapter 4: Thucydidean Temporality

1. Loraux (1986a), 129.
2. The future perfect. *Ibid.*, 342 n.11.
3. Carter (1991).
4. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1358b20–9
5. Compare Thucydides 1.84.4 to 2.39.4. Note that this is also a further instance of Thucydides's backward-looping conjuring trick, because now even traditional educational systems are being analyzed in terms of the power of the polis. Karl Reinhardt makes a similar point. Reinhardt (1966), 198–201.
6. For Pericles offering "support" for his claims, see, e.g., 2.39.2, 2.41.1, 2.41.4, 2.52.2. Like that of Thucydides himself, Pericles's stance on the world is extremely polemical.
7. 2.37.1.
8. 2.37.3.
9. 2.38, 2.40.1.
10. 2.41.4–5.
11. Fear and shame: 2.37.3; critique of fear: 2.40.5; unwritten laws: 2.37.3; love of beauty and toughness: 2.40.1; happiness, freedom, and courage: 2.43.4. Parry makes a similar point, though note how he reduces the antitheses to one: "Thucydides's bewildering play on the logos/ergon antithesis in [the

Funeral Oration], so that it seems almost a higher geometry, with apparently contradictory axioms, as he turns the antithesis back and forth and back again, is to assert that Pericles had accomplished, in the real world of history, what was otherwise hardly possible.” Parry (1981), 185.

12. Cf. Loraux (1986a), 1, 46, 333–7.
13. 1.139.4. He is *also* most powerful in action. By now, hopefully, it is clear why this double claim is neither that Pericles is a master of two fundamentally disparate realms nor that using logos and acting are the same. Rather, logos and action are bound together in a *deinon* manner.
14. 2.41.3.
15. Plato, *Menex.* 239a5–44e1.
16. Demosthenes, 60.27–31.
17. Hyperides, *Ep.* 17–19.
18. Carter (1991), 213–14.
19. Hume (1987), 480–1.
20. At the end of the essay in which Hume makes this argument, he writes, “new discoveries are not to be expected in these matters.” *Ibid.*, 487. In this way, Hume anticipates my argument about tragic temporality; the issues that structure tragic temporality belong to no particular time, but to the human condition, though not, contra Hume, to human nature.
21. One way to demonstrate the *deinon* nature of the very posing, indeed even articulating, of such questions is to bring attention to the fact that there is no escaping the political resonance in the early-twenty-first-century United States of such issues as the eros that launches (unneeded) military expeditions, the compatibility of democracy and empire, the consequences of combining confident foresight with fear and suspicion, etc.
22. See, e.g., *Menex.* 236c1 (Aspasia had almost struck Socrates for his forgetfulness); 236c11–d3 (since Socrates would strip down and dance for Menexenus if he asked, he will recite the speech Aspasia taught him).
23. Plato achieves this effect by claiming that Athens won the first half of the war, namely, that fought before the Peace of Nicias, and then defeated herself in the second half. *Menex.* 242e, 243d.
24. *Menex.* 246d–247c4; Kahn (1963), 229.
25. Cicero, *Orat.* 151.
26. Carter (1991), 213, 29.
27. *Phdr.* 275e1–6.
28. Kahn (1963), 221–3. Kahn notes that, in interpreting the *Menexenus* as Plato’s hostile response to Thucydides, he is following Dionysius of Hallicarnassus, *Dem.* 23. Kahn (1963), 233 n.7.
29. Cf. Henderson (1975), 29.
30. See, e.g., *Meno* 94b, *Prt.* 319e–320a.
31. Hornblower very plausibly argues that both Plato and Aristotle are influenced by Thucydides on *stasis*. Hornblower (1995), 55.
32. Kahn (1963), 229–32.
33. *Menex.* 242c1–243a7.
34. Education: *Menex.* 2338b1–6; lawfulness: *Menex.* 239a1–4.
35. *Menex.* 243e–244b2.

36. *Menex.* 246d–47c3.
37. Of course, the figure of Pericles is more complicated than this, as Pericles must be presumed to have been an able leader in order to be an example of the failure to communicate this leadership – hence Socrates’s association of Pericles with Anaxagoras. At the same time, one can counter that all that is really presupposed is that everyone recognizes that Pericles was a great statesman and that his sons are not. From the fact of this educational failure, it is then argued that not only did Pericles not know anything, but also that he did not lead either. He was popular because he pandered to everyone. This is not an issue that can be resolved here – only identified as an issue.
38. I am following Trevor Saunders’s extraordinarily sharp reading of *epieikeia* in the *Laws*. Saunders (1998), 80–3.
39. *Ibid.*, 87–90.
40. *Ibid.*, 85.
41. Cf. Benardete (2002), 41 (“The conflict between eros and law would seem to point to the opposition between philosophy and the city”).
42. *Menex.* 238d1.
43. 2.37.1.
44. Kahn (1963), 225–6.
45. Finley (1975), 11–12.
46. Though Hegel does say the following: “[Thucydides’s] immortal work is the absolute gain which humanity has derived from the [Peloponnesian War].” Hegel (1956), 266.
47. Williams (1993), 163. Leo Strauss also discusses Thucydides in contrast to Plato, noting that the contrast between the *Menexenus* and the Funeral Oration is especially interesting. Strauss (1964), 139–40, 236–41. Strauss focuses on the questions of political philosophy versus those of metaphysics, and his treatment of the relationship between these two thinkers is entwined with the development of his (Strauss’s) own thought. For a thorough discussion of Strauss on Thucydides, including a careful discussion of Strauss’s treatment of the relation between Plato and Thucydides, see Kleinhaus (2001).
48. Nietzsche (1990), “What I Owe to the Ancients,” sec. 2 (Hollingdale translation); see also Nietzsche (1968), sec. 443.
49. Kitto (1966), 350.
50. See, e.g., Nietzsche (1974), sec. 370.
51. *Ibid.*, sec. 334.
52. See, e.g., *ibid.*, sec. 381; Nietzsche (1984), Preface, sec. 2.
53. Nietzsche (1989), sec. 3. Nietzsche makes much the same point earlier in the section from the *Twilight of the Idols* cited at length in the text.
54. For instance, consider the import of an “aesthetic Socrates” in sections 14 and 15 of the *Birth of Tragedy* and the “defense” of Plato in *Twilight of the Idols*, “The Improvers of Mankind,” secs. 22–3. Especially interesting is *Gay Science* section 372, which attributes Plato’s idealism to the *strength* of his senses; the argument is that Plato needed his idealism because of this strength, where we moderns adopt idealism out of an exhaustion with life. Relative to Thucydides, however, Plato is weak or, being still more precise, dull. As

Nietzsche says elsewhere, though without explicitly citing Plato, “the duller the eye, the more extensive the good.” 1974, sec. 53. It is Thucydides, as representative of the older Greeks, who sees that which is hidden, though paradoxically, and unlike Plato, he does this by having the courage to stop at the surface of the world and not by positing depth. 1974, Preface, sec. 4. It is, of course, no coincidence I think that Nietzsche, in grappling with the difference between Plato and Thucydides, implicated complicated notions of vision and self.

55. See Rahe’s argument that Thucydides is offering a critique of *political* realism. Rahe (1995–6), 110ff.; also see Crane (1998), especially chapter two, and generally Lebow (2003). That said, we should remember that there is, following Heidegger, an important argument that Nietzsche himself succumbed to Platonism and that his seeming reification of “power” is one important aspect of this.
56. Reinhardt, for instance, does not think that historical writing achieves the level of Thucydides’s technical fullness until the nineteenth century. Reinhardt (1966), 188–9.
57. Heidegger (1979–87), Vol. 4, 165 (Krell translation).
58. Nietzsche (1962), 68.
59. For Aristotle on Heraclitus, see *Metaphysics* Gamma (for obvious reasons, the references here are partial). For Hegel on Heraclitus, see Hegel (1995), Vol. 1, 279–87, Vol. 2, 140. For Hegel’s critique of Aristotle, see Hegel (1999), 439–40. Heidegger already uses Heraclitus to critique Aristotle in *Being and time* (1962, sec. 44) and returns to this theme often; see, e.g., the pieces collected in *Early Greek Thinking* (1975) and his two lecture courses on Heraclitus (Heidegger, 1979; Heidegger and Fink, 1993).
60. Gadamer (1999), 211 (citing DK 22A1).
61. As Hans Sluga has reminded me, Heidegger did not always think the polis was not political. In 1935, in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the polis was political. The analysis offered here is from 1942.
62. Heidegger (1996), 79–86. It is unfortunate that Detienne summarily dismisses Heidegger’s thinking on the polis because of one dubious etymology and because of Heidegger’s notorious political involvements. Detienne (1996), 27–8. There is ample room for questioning Heidegger, and particularly for connecting his notion of the polis with his vicious political associations and actions (one thinks of the dates 1935 and 1942), but it must be done in a far more subtle way. For such an approach, see the connection Hans Sluga makes between *deinon*, the uncanny, and the violence that is Dasein (i.e., human being). Sluga (2001, 210–11); see also Davis (1990), 165–6. This connection resonates particularly well with the complex role of *deimon* in the polis dramatized in the *Eumenides*.
63. Richard Seaford has very recently argued against a political aspect of Heraclitus’s thought, but his critique is not relevant here since he uses a traditional notion of political. After all, on Seaford’s account, Heraclitus is heavily influenced by and engaging with the advent of currency and Orphic ritual, both of which would seem to be deeply related to the polis in the nonpolitical sense discussed previously. Seaford (2004), 184ff.

64. I should note that Gregory Crane too notes many of these textual similarities, but he does not move on to consider their philosophical implications. Crane (1996), 37, 41. Paul Rahe also notes the parallels, and Monoson and Loriaux attribute Thucydides's ongoing relevance to political scientists to his use of antithesis; yet there is no discussion as to the metaphysical significance of this fact. Rahe (1995–6), 140; Monoson (1998).
65. Cf. Thucydides 1.20.1; Heraclitus fr. 1.
66. Heraclitus frs. 42, 56, 57, 104, 106.
67. Cf. Thucydides 1.21.1–2 and Thucydides's Pericles insistence on supporting his praise of Athens.
68. See, e.g., Allison, Parry, and Rusten on Thucydides and Classen on Heraclitus.
69. Seaford (2004), 231–2. Seaford's argument is actually stronger, namely, that the advent of currency is the key force that initiates the Greek miracle. Ibid., 175ff. The argument here does not rely on such a strong interpretation of the advent of currency, though within the framework of this book, what one wants to say is that Seaford argues persuasively that the advent of currency disclosed a new world, but he does not argue why or how it founds one. If currency did indeed found a world, then the explanation is to be found in the truth of the philosophy, such as that of Heraclitus, enabled by this disclosure.
70. A final direct connection is suggested by Munn. As mentioned earlier, Heraclitus was famous for depositing his riddling texts in the temple of Artemis. Provocatively, the last phrase we have from Thucydides, literally the middle of a sentence, is "to Artemis." Munn adduces a number of sound reasons why such a dedication would have been appropriate, particularly through Artemis's connection with good counsel, and if, as argued here, Book Eight in its current form has a sense all of its own, then it makes especially interesting the question of why Thucydides chose to stop work on such an auspicious word. Munn (2000), 326–7.
71. Heraclitus, fr. 93. All Heraclitean texts are from Robinson; all translations are my own, though they are heavily influenced by the works I have consulted. In this fragment (93), the verb *legein* (usually translated as "to speak") demands that it be understood in contrast with "to conceal."
72. Kahn (1979), 123–4.
73. Heraclitus fr. 34.
74. This kind of accumulation of citations also makes for a good memorial, which is what Simonides's riddling memorials achieve, as analyzed by Anne Carson.
75. *Rhet.* 1407b11–20.
76. Kahn (1979), 98.
77. Heraclitus's gleeful violation of the Principle of Noncontradiction is exactly what arouses Aristotle's ire in the *Metaphysics*. Yet, hidden in Aristotle's account of this very principle is an odd temporal loop because his principle dictates that opposing predicates cannot be true "at the same time" (*hama*). For *hama* in this sense, see *Metaph.* 1010b18, 20, 1011a33 and *Sens.* 448 b19–20; but see *Metaph.* 1069a14, which seems to require that *hama* be given a nontemporal interpretation. Ross (1924), Vol. 2, 344–5. I think that *hama*

must be given a temporal interpretation in the key passages on the Principle of Noncontradiction because avoiding it requires attributing to Aristotle a very complicated and dubious argument about potentiality that he does not make himself. The curious loop occurs because Aristotle uses the Principle of Noncontradiction to define time itself in the *Physics*. Motions are precisely that which preserve identity amid contradiction (though they destroy themselves). See, e.g., Protevi (1994), 39, 49, 51. Motion is what allows the same person to be both healthy and sick. Thus, not surprisingly, motion is then used to define time (see *Ph.* 219b3), which has already been used to define the Principle of Noncontradiction. Such a definitional bootstrap operation (one is tempted to say “time is always already in contradiction and not in contradiction with itself”) is obviously no problem for Heraclitus, and, in fact referential dilemmas would seem to be just what he thinks cannot be escaped. The point of this footnote is not to critique Aristotle, but to indicate the very substantial philosophical issues at stake between Heraclitus and Aristotle and implicitly addressed by Thucydides.

78. Heraclitus, fr. 8.
79. Heraclitus, fr. 54.
80. Heraclitus, fr. 51.
81. Robinson (1987), 115–16.
82. Cf. Heraclitus, frs. 53, 80.
83. See, e.g., Heidegger (1959), 114.
84. Heraclitus, fr. 123.
85. By calling them “near contemporary” I do not mean to deny the difference in age between the two men. Thucydides was active more than a generation before Plato, and Thucydides’s work itself may have influenced Plato, whereas the reverse was not possible. Nevertheless, I believe that direct influence need not have occurred and, philosophically, it would not have much mattered if it did. Plato did respond to contemporary tragedy and rhetoric, as well as to Heraclitus, and this response is the clue that I am pursuing.
86. *Metaph.* 987a29–b1.
87. Cf. Crane (1998), 19.
88. Cf. Crane (1996), 80ff.
89. *Meno* 97e1–3.
90. *Republic* VII, 514a–517a.
91. This is hardly the only odd twist at key moments in Plato. For example in the *Sophist*, it is the Sophist who is the hunter of young men (221d13), but the stranger makes clear that he and Theatetus are hunting the Sophist (235a10–b3). The similarly painfully ironic portrayal of writing in the *Phaedrus* is wellknown (i.e., a written document denigrating writing), not to mention Socrates’s rhetorical aggression in the *Gorgias* and the *Protagoras*.
92. Incidentally, this is how I understand Heidegger’s constant return to seminal philosophical texts, including Plato’s Myth of the Cave. Because the power to disclose a world through logos is not absolute, the possibility of destabilizing rereadings is never foreclosed. Yet, it is not enough to gesture broadly to such interpretive possibilities; one must actually render the reading, offer the counter-logos that will disclose a new world.

93. *Meno* 80e.
94. Even if it be granted that Plato's discussion centers on time, it may be objected that Meno's paradox can be understood in terms that do not presuppose time, just like the Principle of Noncontradiction. For instance, one can consider a question like the following: what makes two different geometric shapes triangles? This question does not seem to require a temporal progression; rather, the answer would seem to involve an analysis of the definition of the terms involved – i.e., the two shapes are triangles because they are two-dimensional enclosed figures with three sides. Responding to this challenge fully is impossible here, but a few brief responses can be made. First of all, the key issue here is with Plato's understanding and resolution of this problem and its contrast with that of Thucydides. Even if Plato's approach to the whole issue is dubious, it is still foundational in its dubiousness. Moreover, Plato's assumption of the role of temporality seems plausible. If the relationship between triangles is really atemporal, then the question again becomes how temporal beings (i.e., humans) can come to know such eternal verities. And Plato's theory of recollection is an answer to precisely this question. Finally, the presentation of timeless propositions seems to me, alas, to equivocate on the meaning of "is." Which is to say that "is" is taken as nonproblematically equating two terms, e.g., "*this* is a triangle, just like *that*." There is no history, not of the terms, not of the question, not of the grammar. Most importantly, there is no discussion of an historically located practice that picks out the relevantly comparable aspects as such.
95. This reading follows that of Saunders, and "transvaluation" is the right term since Plato is taking familiar terms and giving them a new, even inverted, sense. In so doing, he is consciously engaging in the exercise that Thucydides claimed occurred without conscious will in Corcyra, though no doubt Plato would argue that such events only demonstrate the urgent necessity of putting our values on a firm foundation. Nietzsche, of course, is also interested in such a transvaluation, and this underscores the deep parallels that remain between Nietzsche and Plato (following Heidegger).
96. See the "almost" self-parodic derivation of the size of the proposed polis based on the number of divisors. *Laws* 738a1–b1.
97. *Laws* 735d1–2.
98. *Laws* 735a6–36c4.
99. Put another way, following Benardete, Plato must be assuming that some sort of living writing, of the type attempted in the *Phaedrus*, is animating the laws, or else how is he foreclosing differences of interpretation or even misinterpretation of these written artifacts? Benardete (2002), 57–9.
100. Not coincidentally, David Charles has read Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* as offering a similar answer, namely, that definitional and explanatory practices are not merely connected, but interdependent. This is to say that knowledge does not move in one direction – e.g., from a name (say, "horse") to an explanation. Rather, the explanation (and what will count as an explanation) may well effect the name. It is this play, rather than metaphysical recollection, that leads to knowledge for Aristotle. Charles (2000), 248–51.

101. And so I certainly agree with arguments, such as that of Reinhardt, that in Thucydides there is much ruthless reduction, especially to power, but what I deny is that power forms part of a clear and distinct hierarchy.
102. And to translate back into Berlin's famous discussion: hedgehogs deduce, while foxes abduce.
103. Here is how Peirce defines abduction formally:
The form of [abductive] inference, therefore, is this:

The surprising fact, *C*, is observed;
But if *A* were true, *C* would be a matter of course,
Hence there is reason to suspect that *A* is true.

Thus, *A* cannot be abductively inferred, or if you prefer the expression, cannot be abductively conjectured until its entire content is already present in the premise "If *A* were true, *C* would be a matter of course." Peirce (1955), 151–2. Obviously, the form of induction is not very formal at all, but it does require interrogation of what one thought one knew and why, as well as the testing of what it was that had been assumed and is now in question.

104. Rawlings (1981).
105. 5.29.1, 5.44.1.
106. 5.28.2.
107. 5.28.2.
108. 5.82–3.
109. 5.45.
110. 5.43.2.
111. Contra Hunter, who attributes to Thucydides a cyclical approach to time, with Syracuse succeeding Athens after it, like Athens, defeated a great invasion. Hunter (1982), 45–6.
112. Despite his use of abstraction, they are also not ever more abstract or clear or distinct, but ever more specific and embroiled in tension (contra Allison).
113. 6.15.3.
114. 6.15.4.
115. Forde's description of this situation is exactly right:

For the city of Athens in the latter part of Thucydides' *History*, the irony [is] twofold. First, the Athenian regime, which has always prided itself on its freedom and its cultivation of individual talents, finally has produced an individual whose talents and whose aspirations are so great that they threaten to overwhelm the city as a whole. Secondly, the city by the end of the *History* has put itself in a position where it cannot prevail without his leadership (6.15.4). There is irony in this for Alcibiades as well. Alcibiades' ambition is to rule perfectly in the city, to be given a position of supreme honor by the free acclaim of his fellow citizens. The achievement of that aim, however, would virtually dissolve the political arena which alone can give him the kind of honor he desires. (Forde 1992, 17–18)

We, of course, have a very precise name for the situation that Athens and Alcibiades find themselves in: *deinon*.

116. Connor (1985), 106.
117. 1.22.4.
118. Cf. Connor (1985), 214–17; Euben (1990), 200; Rood (1998), 252.

119. Connor (1985), 218.
120. 8.76.1.
121. 1.143.5.
122. 2.41.4.
123. 2.37.1.
124. Connor (1985), 215.
125. Shrimpton (1997), 266–86.
126. E.g., 8.20.
127. E.g., 8.5, 8.21, 8.65.
128. E.g., 8.31.1–2.
129. 8.87.4. It is worth observing here that even as he notes his confusion and performs the confusion in the text, Thucydides is still using extremely precise vocabulary for the explanation he believes provides the most clarity, only once using a noun (and in no earlier extant text), *anisōsis* (“to make equal”), to describe the strategy adopted by the Persian Tissaphernes in connection with the Athenians and Spartans. Lateiner (1976), 271; Allison (1997b), 252.
130. De Romilly (1968), 10.
131. 1.73.2. Of course, the first step, and one that serves to magnify the issue, via the trope of paralipsis, is to insist that there is no need to discuss the very thing that they will discuss, namely, the unique Athenian contributions to victory in the war against Persia.
132. 1.121.3.
133. 1.82.1.
134. Cf. Quine (1960), 193–4.
135. Brandom (1994), xvi.
136. For a jarring example of this move, see the end of Allison’s discussion of *anoia*. Allison (1997b), 81.
137. In fairness, Brandom recognizes the strengths of the representational model, and his task is to offer an account that is at least as satisfactory while not relying on “intentional states.” Ibid., xvi–xvii.
138. I say “insist” because clearly I think such projects are doomed. Though all are different in many important respects, I do not see why notions as diverse as Quine’s “eternal sentences” and Grice’s “timeless meaning” are not as susceptible to a Derridean critique as Husserl’s attempt to achieve “truly apodictic inner perception” through evading time (contra Kant). Grice (1995), 88–9; Derrida (1973), 60–9; Husserl (1989), 115–16.
139. De Romilly (1968), 11.
140. Stahl’s understanding of Thucydides on time and meaning is very similar to the ideas offered here:

[F]or Thucydides, the ‘meaning’ of a series of events is never something fixed in advance . . . rather the sense of each series of events grows out of that series and is *inseparably* joined to it. . . . [T]he characteristic feature of the final situation in a given event sequence, i.e. that there is no way out, remains the focus of observation. (Stahl 2003, 135–6)

The primary conceptual difference I would highlight is that Stahl does not explicitly connect this future-oriented argument about meaning to the

possibility (indeed, necessity) of humans twisting back to take control of the series, though he does seem generally alert to questions of identity and “reverse” causality. Ibid., 8.

141. Hodge (1999), 123–4, 38 (following Heidegger).
142. See, e.g., *NE* 1142a14–16; *Rhet.* 1388a31–1390b13; *Pol.* 1302a16–1307b25. This list of more human temporalities implicit to Aristotle goes a bit further than that of Hodge.
143. For Hegel, time is so bound up with humanity that in the *Science of Logic*, which is meant to reproduce the “thoughts of God,” time plays a very small role (*as* time – beginning, becoming, negation, determination – such seemingly extrahuman notions play a large role). Hegel (1999), 49–50. In other words, for Hegel, all time is irreducibly *ours*. When Hegel does discuss time and engages with Aristotle, he does so in the *Philosophy of Nature* in the Mechanics section (section 257 in particular). Derrida, oddly, does not seem interested in this choice of location; Hoffman does note the location but does not go any further. Derrida (1982), 41; Hoffman (1986), 85. My brief analysis is simply that we only engage with anything like the time studied by Aristotle through our engagement with the natural world – our Other, as it were – and so this is where Hegel, appropriately, engages with Aristotle on time. Thucydides, like Hegel in the *Phenomenology*, does not look to our Other in order to perform the temporality that is irreducibly ours. That said, it is hardly as if our engagement with the natural world is insignificant; the orientation of the philosophical tradition is to a large extent justified, and the role of time in Thucydides is itself a considerable demonstration of this. Thucydides’s account is organized around winters and summers because summer is the time to go on campaign (also to harvest, which is a significant fact that Thucydides duly considers). But, as we have seen, the summers and winters are only part of Thucydides’s framework, and they are not the part that initiated us all into historical time.
144. In this connection, see Shrimpton’s brilliant analysis of the order in which Thucydides narrates events, sometimes in what he calls “absolute time” (i.e., the order in which events seem to have actually happened) and sometimes in “experienced time” (i.e., the order in which events were reported to Thucydides). Shrimpton (1997), 266–86. Though very interesting, neither notion of time, nor Hunter’s notion of “logical time” in Thucydides, can explain the phenomenon of world disclosure. Hunter (1982), 238. Not that Hunter, like Shrimpton, is in correct to insist that the crucial temporality is not a simple chain of events flowing in one direction, but only that the process she describes is too simply cyclical and too little human. Ibid., 242ff.
145. It is hard to think of time in this way, but there are certainly precedents in antiquity outside of tragedy. For example, Simonides compares time to the whirlpool Charybdis (described in the *Odyssey* as *deinon*). The crucial thing about Charybdis is not that it destroys, but that it destroys through confusion. Simonides, fr. 522; see also fr. 50 and Eleg. 13. For a poet entrusted with measuring out praise and blame (indeed, if we follow Anne Carson, the inventor of the epinician), such confusion is anathema. All the same, such confusion is the precondition for Simonides’s art, which is why Simonides is

also credited with “standing up” for time against a philosopher. Simonides, fr. 645. This standoff is reminiscent of Zarathustra’s claim that all revenge stems from resentment of time’s relentless “it was.” Nietzsche (1978) II.12. This is to say that even when it is most forcefully rejected (as it was by Plato), and perhaps especially then, tragic temporality structures the world that humans live in. This would seem to be a lesson, perhaps the lesson, of the history of the *Menexenus*.

146. The distinction between individuals, cities, and institutions is admittedly rough and ready. What I wish to signal is that Thucydides does not provide us only with tragic protagonists, like Themistocles, or tragic cities, like Athens and Sparta, but also with tragic institutions that do not fit either category – such as the Athenian democracy, naval power, the Spartan Confederation, etc. Recognizing and analyzing such intermediate structures is already a considerable accomplishment, but I am arguing that Thucydides presents institutions as having the same tragic roots as individuals and cities. Hence they share the same tragic destiny.

Appendix I: Restoring Key Terms 1.1–1.23

1. Macleod (1983), “Reason and Necessity,” 64.
2. See previous readings of 1.22.4 and of 1.23.6, as well as the general concern with clarity and vision (e.g., 1.1.3). There is also Thucydides’s concern with the visual impression made by Athens and Sparta in connection with his thought experiment (1.10) and his general contempt for *hearsay* (1.20.1) and pleasing hearers (1.21.1, 1.22.4).
3. See, e.g., 3.20.3, 4.122.6.
4. See, e.g., Heidegger (1962), 262/219.
5. Cole (1983), 7–10. Cole’s discussion is only one of many treatments. See also Bernasconi (1985), 15–27; Allison (1997b), 232; Shrimpton (1997), 7.
6. Cole (1983), 25–7; Heidegger (1997), 47.
7. Cole (1983), 27 n.48.
8. This *has* been argued by many, including not only Cole and Snell, but also Mark Griffith (in conversation).
9. Cole (1983), 8–9.
10. For an account of what it might mean for a phenomenon to demand to be seen, see Appendix III.
11. Parry’s description is, as usual, exactly right:
[I]t remains incontestably true that all speakers in the *History* use the same individual, thoroughly intellectual, style, with the same broken symmetry, the same bold construction, and the same passionate precision, as Thucydides himself. (Parry 1981, 178)
12. Woodman (1988), 13–14.
13. Ostwald (1989), 25; Edmunds (1975), 106–9.
14. Macleod (1983), “Form and Meaning in the Melian Dialogue,” 385.
15. Cf. 7.8.2.
16. Cf. Euripides, *HF* 204–5, 247; also see Aristotle’s *Rhet.* 1394a22. For the *gnome* of an action, see Thucydides 8.87.2.

17. Cf. LSJ.
18. Cogan (1981), 129ff. 92–94.
19. Cf. 1.118.2
20. Cf. Gomme (1950), Vol. 2, 383.
21. Noonan (1992), 38 n.3.
22. Vegetti, whose argument largely parallels mine, emphasizes the forensic context here. Uncovering a *logos* trying to conceal itself is most often seen as a legal task. Vegetti (1999), 278. The most helpful benefit of emphasizing the legal imagery is that, in the courtroom setting, it is especially likely that both sides have a case and the achievement of a clarity is not only difficult, but may well require the acceptance of some fuzziness (e.g., “Yes the law is ambiguous, but we must follow the interpretation that more fully accords with the legislator’s intent”). My treatment is also largely in accord with that of Kirkwood, who finds *prophasis* here as a more basic, scientific cause to be “demonstrably baseless.” Kirkwood (1952), 41.
23. This sentence also has its *aporiai*. Here are the two main problems: What kind of dative is *τῇ ἀληθεστάτῃ προφάσει*? If this is a dative of means (as seems more likely), then this suggests that the *prophasis* itself contributed to Athenian ambitions, and I am sympathetic to this, especially as it suggests that the *prophasis* (what the Athenians said) had causal power. But if this is the case, then “in real truth” makes no sense at all as a translation. If this is a dative of accompanying circumstance, then the problem may seem to disappear because then the dative clause appears to be an objective commentary on Athenian ambitions; nevertheless, this dative primarily expresses the accompanying manner in which an action is done (e.g., quietly). There is also the question of the adverb “εὐπρεπῶς” (“plausibly”), which seems to be in apposition to the dative phrase in the first half of the sentence. Plausibly is close because the word does appeal to common values even as it is somewhat specious, though perhaps not specious enough. Worse, what plausibly does not seem to convey is the visual significance of *eu-prepei*, which could simply mean “good-looking.” No better translation has suggested itself.
24. 6.90 2–4.
25. 7.66.2.
26. Cf. Aeschin. 2.76, 2.172–6, Andoc. 3.3, Isoc. 8.84; also see Plato, *Menex.* 242e4–243a1. Aristophanes in the *Knights* (103) seems to use the notion of an invasion of Carthage as a joke.
27. Rawlings (1975), 78.
28. *Ibid.*, 69–70, 97.
29. *Ibid.*, 11, 97.
30. *Ibid.*, 64–9.
31. *Ibid.*, 69–71.
32. *Ibid.*, 70.
33. *Ibid.*, 71.
34. *Ibid.*, 97.
35. *Ibid.*, 70–1.
36. *Ancient Medicine* is crucial to Rawlings’s interpretation. *Ibid.*, 72–3.
37. Vegetti (1999), 286.

38. Smyth (1956), sec. 1153.
39. As noted by Noonan (1992), 37–9.
40. De Ste. Croix (1972), 65; Thucydides 7.18.2.
41. Kallett-Marx (1993), 12.
42. For instance, Thucydides's two different reasons for the failure of the Sicilian Expedition are not consistent with each other or with the sequence of events that he narrates. Compare 2.65.11 with 6.53–4.
43. Noonan (1992), 37 n.1.
44. Ostwald (1989), 3–5.
45. *Ibid.*, 24.
46. *Ibid.*, 39. See, e.g., Thucydides 6.18.3, 6.87.2.
47. 4.61.4. Orwin (1994), 163–5.
48. 7.57.7.
49. Schreckenberg (1964). See, for instance, the connection between *ananke* and slavery, especially Euripides's description of *ananke* as *deinon* when it falls upon the royal family of Troy and Hecuba is separated from Cassandra by force. *Ibid.*, 26 (discussing Euripides, *Tro.* 616). Curiously, Schreckenberg does not discuss Thucydides 1.23.6, though he does generally cite Thucydides's usage as consistent with that of *ananke* as binding. Hornblower makes the same point about *ananke*, noting that *anankein* in our passage “need not imply predetermination or total lack of choice.” Hornblower (1991), Vol. 1, 66 (following Macleod).
50. Noonan (1992), 41–7.
51. 1.86.
52. Indeed, Dionysius of Halicarnassus complains about just this, namely, that Thucydides is too diffuse in his deployment of the *prophasis* (*Thuc.* 10–11). If there is a deeper necessity that he has discovered, shouldn't Thucydides make it absolutely clear? If it were a mechanical necessity (or objective precondition for that matter), yes, but, as we have seen, this is not at all what is going on in the text. Kirkwood puts this objection well:

If [Thucydides] can explain the smallness of the Trojan expedition (I, 11, 1) objectively, scientifically, even with an obvious awareness of economic factors, we cannot suppose him to have been unable to express the causes of the Peloponnesian War in the same spirit, had he chosen to. (Kirkwood 1952, 59.)
53. 1.22.4.
54. Edmunds (1975), 155–63.
55. 1.20.3.

Appendix II: Pretragic History of Deimon

1. Cf. Smyth (1956), sec. 829; also Chantraine (1983), 255–56.
2. This is implicit in Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1395a9 and explicit in Demetrius, *Rhet.* 241ff.; see also Cicero, *De Inv.* 1.53.100.
3. Voit (1934), 4–5.
4. *Ibid.*, 13.
5. Schlesinger (1936–7), 63.

6. Cf. Soph. *Ant.* 367.
7. Smyth (1956), sec. 841.
8. *Ibid.*, sec. 858.11.
9. Thunder: *Il.* 8.133; strife's cry: *Il.* 11.10; cries of fighting humans: *Il.* 14.401; plumed helmets: *Il.* 3.337, *Il.* 11.42.
10. The sea: *Od.* 3.322; the waves: *Od.* 5.52; Scylla: *Od.* 12.85, 12.119; Charybdis: *Od.* 12.236, 260, 430.
11. *Il.* 11.654.
12. *Il.* 19.12ff. The suitors also report that Odysseus glared at them in a *deinon* way as he shot them (*Od.* 24.179). Menelaus and Paris also look at each other in a *deinon* way (*Il.* 3.342), but if anything, this strengthens the point because only now, in the middle of both armies, do these two relative mediocrities glare like great heroes or gods.
13. *Il.* 13.100.
14. *Il.* 2.321.
15. *Il.* 16.789, 706.
16. *Il.* 5.439. Perhaps Apollo's role here as maintaining boundaries against the incursion of superhuman protagonists explains to some extent the problematic role that he often has in tragedy (particularly in Euripides).
17. *Il.* 8.135.
18. *Od.* 8.409.
19. Cf. *Od.* 10.136, 11.8, 12.150, 12.449.
20. *Od.* 6.125; Clay (1974), 129–36.
21. *Ibid.*, 133.
22. Nagler (1996), 143.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Nagler (1996), 145. In fact, there is even a Homeric category for such performative speech: *muthos* versus *epos*. Cf. Nagy (1992), 122 (following Martin).
25. Nagler (1996), 148.
26. *Ibid.*, 146.
27. *Ibid.*, 158.
28. This is, notoriously, how Hegel describes the role of women in the polis. Hegel (1977), sec. 475.
29. *Sh.* 71.
30. Cf. Von Fritz (1974), 26–30.
31. Cap: *Sh.* 226; snakes: *Sh.* 161.
32. *Th.* 829.
33. *Th.* 221.
34. Drowning: *WD* 687; losing one's goods: *WD* 691; overloading one's wagon: *WD* 692.
35. Drowning is no doubt different from losing one's goods in an accident, but the particular terror of drowning also involves measuring. As West notes, it is *deinon* to drown because one receives no burial, that which is one's due as a human. West (1978), 325.
36. *WD* 694.
37. *WD* 760–4.
38. Cf. Detienne (1996), 45–8.

39. Hesiod, *Th.* 27.
40. Detienne (1996), 70ff. Indeed, following Gagarin, the logos of the poet is also *dike*. Both the poet and the king create *dike* through logos. Gagarin (1992), 61–5. The implication of the poet in the creation of *dike* only makes the role of *dike* in the tragedians that much more uncannily complex.
41. I say “further” because Detienne’s whole approach is rather Heideggerian, a fact he both acknowledges and shuns. Detienne (1996), 26–8.
42. This is Heidegger’s analysis of the pluperfect verb ἤδη in *Iliad* 1, and it is used to describe our friend Calchas, the seer who was at Aulis and inaugurates the action of the *Iliad*. Heidegger (1975), 33.
43. Simonides, fr. 543, lns 18–20.
44. Of course, as Anne Carson notes in discussing this passage, it may not be possible. Carson (1999), 57–60. Seeing the *deinon*, much less instructing another in seeing the *deinon*, has several preconditions. Interestingly, Carson appeals to Heraclitus in her reading of this passage.

Appendix III: Wittgenstein on Fly-Bottles, Aspect Seeing, and History

1. On the history of the Wittgenstein corpus, see Stern (1996).
2. *PI* sec. 414.
3. *PI* sec. 132.
4. *PI* secs. 125, 339–40.
5. *PI* sec. 348.
6. *PI* sec. 351.
7. *PI* sec. 352 It is this particularly modern form of the either/or fallacy that I believe tripped up Allison.
8. Cf. *PI* secs. 129, 298–9, 352.
9. Cf. *PI* sec. 154, p. 202.
10. Cf. Budd (1989), 77–99; Mulhall (1990), 53ff.
11. Cf. *PI*, p. 212. Wittgenstein also notes that there are examples that do not presuppose other objects, such as the double-cross, which is just a switch between background and foreground. *PI*, p. 207.
12. Cf. Mulhall (1990), 29ff.
13. *PI* sec. 218.
14. *PI* secs. 234–5.
15. Indeed, according to Hallett, Wittgenstein may have considered calling his new work “Philosophical Investigations Contrasted with the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.” Hallett (1977), 65.
16. Cf. Tilghman (1983), 123–6. Of course, it is this very intermediate picture that will drop out as irrelevant in the *Investigations*—see the famous beetle in a box. *PI* sec. 293; also see *PI* secs. 139–40. In fact, this is also why I believe that aspect seeing is an implicit part of the argument in the first half of the *Investigations*; one thinks here of all the visual images that lead one astray (e.g., tables in one’s mind), culminating in the admonishment “try not to think of understanding as a ‘mental process’ at all.” *PI* sec. 154.
17. Though it is not a point that can be pursued here, it is extremely provocative that this passage is related by Wittgenstein to the subject (1988, 5.5421).

It seems to me that any position on the subject forces one into a stand on history and vice versa; see the later discussion on Heidegger for some related elaboration.

18. Cf. Wittgenstein (1988), 3.13, 3.14, 3.23.
19. *Ibid.*, 4.023.
20. *PI*, p. 193; also see *PI*, p. 200.
21. *PI*, p. 200; also see *PI* sec. 436; Wittgenstein (1975), I, XIII.
22. Tilghman (1983), 134.
23. Mulhall (1990), 137.
24. Cf. Wittgenstein (1980), p. 62.
25. *PI* secs. 241, 242.
26. Wittgenstein (1972a), secs. 287, 359, 475.
27. *Ibid.*, sec. 422.
28. Axis: *ibid.*, sec. 152; scaffolding: *ibid.*, sec. 211.
29. *Ibid.*, sec. 205.

Appendix IV: Heidegger on World and Originary Temporality

1. See especially Dreyfus (1991).
2. The most expanded argument to this effect is in Kisiel (1993).
3. *BT* 93/65. The page references to *Being and Time* are first to the standard English translation (Macquarrie/Robinson) and second to the standard German edition. When I am referring to an entire section, I just cite *BT* and then the section number.
4. See, e.g., *BT* 232–3/188–9. To some extent, this is an overstatement because Heidegger emphasizes that even and especially when in angst, humans remain in a world.
5. Hoffman (1986), 124.
6. This phrase is not in *Being and Time*, though see *BT* 25–6/6–7 and Dreyfus (1991), 107 (discussing *BT* 18–19/85–6) and Heidegger (1988), sec. 22.
7. In the Anglo-American tradition, the most famous version of this argument is Donald Davidson's "The Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme."
8. *BT* 167/129.
9. This is only a very brief gloss on the question of "roles." There are no roles in *Being and Time*, though the description of a for-the-sake-of-which (*Das Worumwillen*) that a human may have often sounds like a role – such as that of craftsman. *BT* 153/118. The problem with roles, even the weaker term "social position" preferred by Blattner, is that it is just too reified. Blattner (1999), 75ff. Heidegger does not say how many for-the-sake-of-whichs a human being may have or how they are to be related. For our purposes, we will do with "social positions" because it is relatively clear what this means.
10. I use the terms "human" or "human being" in place of Heidegger's technical term for the entity he is discussing, namely, *Dasein*. There is a cost to this gloss, but I think it is not prohibitive for my purposes in this appendix.
11. *BT* 26–33/7–13.
12. *BT* 375–80/327–32.
13. *BT* 376/328.

14. *BT* 355/307–8.
15. *BT* 99/69.
16. *BT* sec. 29.
17. *BT* sec. 31; Dreyfus (1991), 184ff.
18. *BT* sec. 41.
19. Heidegger himself discusses the “ordinary interpretation of time” (e.g., *BT* 472/420), but Blattner does not make it clear when he is discussing this category. I take it that Blattner’s notions of “time reckoning” and “pragmatic temporality” should be seen as his gloss of Heidegger here. Cf. Blattner (1999), 127ff.
20. See, e.g., *BT* 168/130.
21. *BT* 467/414.
22. *BT* sec. 79. Note that “succession” is not a category that Heidegger himself derives from originary temporality.
23. *BT* sec. 72. Indeed, in these difficult sections, Heidegger uses the word “aspect” to describe the situation that humans find themselves in. The everyday world is no mere aspect; humans live in an “as” structure, i.e., a world of aspect seeing, that cannot be willed away. *BT* 422–3/371. The timeless subject without history remains in an as structure, but is inauthentic (*BT* 386/337, 443/391), which means that it refuses to be what it is, namely, without an essence. This might be how we could describe the way of being of the *Tractatus* – willing to be ahistorical even as it manifestly is historically located.
24. However, as De Boer points out, Heidegger never retracts *Being and Time*, but repeatedly explains the missing division as the result of his lacking the power for “adequate saying.” De Boer (2000), 129–36. Blattner is in a position to explain this lack – for how could language, especially technical philosophical language, capture the centrality of human action that Heidegger wishes to restore versus machine-like cognition? Indeed, Blattner could have gone so far as to explain that now, decades later, with so many of Heidegger’s contemporaries having receded, we are finally in a position to profit more from the language that he could in fact use. This is clearly the argument I would favor.
25. *BT* 377/329; Blattner (1999), 89.
26. There is an important analogy with the dispute over the role of *prophasis* in Thucydides 1.23.6. Here too, one sure way to misunderstand the phenomenon is, ironically, to insist that it explain *everything*.
27. *BT* 291/247ff.
28. Blattner does not use the notion of originary existentiell; Heidegger only labels demise here an “intermediary phenomenon.” *BT* 291/247. Still, elsewhere (334/288), Heidegger does use this notion and it makes good sense. Demise, insofar as it is attested to by our kind of being, is originary. However, insofar as demise is fundamentally different, depending on time and place, it is existentiell (versus existentielle). Here are a few other notions that I would claim to be originary existentiell – understanding the appeal (a point brought to my attention by Noa Shein), idle talk, curiosity, ambiguity, and apophantic assertion. Also, there are originary existentiell possibilities – i.e.,

authenticity and inauthenticity. Of course, this is a controversial point that I can only state here. What is important is that the extent to which Blattner's notion of what an originary phenomenon must explain is too absolute and general.

29. However, on 479/426, there does seem to be a pretty clear claim that *all* of world-time is drawn from originary temporality. Nevertheless, there are at least two reasons not to take this citation as supporting Blattner:
 1. Heidegger has derived all of the structures that he identifies with world-time from originary temporality – as Blattner demonstrates. The question is about what of *other* features of world-time, such as succession, which seem, *prima facie*, to be features of time as something present-at-hand.
 2. This passage is polemical. Heidegger is stating that the ordinary interpretation of time does not sketch out (*vorzeichnen*) the only possible horizon for making everyday time intelligible. On the contrary, it is originary temporality that provides the horizon that makes everyday time intelligible. From this perspective, it makes sense to then claim that all of everyday time's structures emerge from originary temporality – in the sense that without originary temporality there would be no intelligibility at all.
30. Blattner (1999), 249 (following Dreyfus (1991), 278–9). See *BT* 269–70/226–7.
31. *Ibid.*, 181–4.
32. *BT* 475/423.
33. Blattner (1999), 219.

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